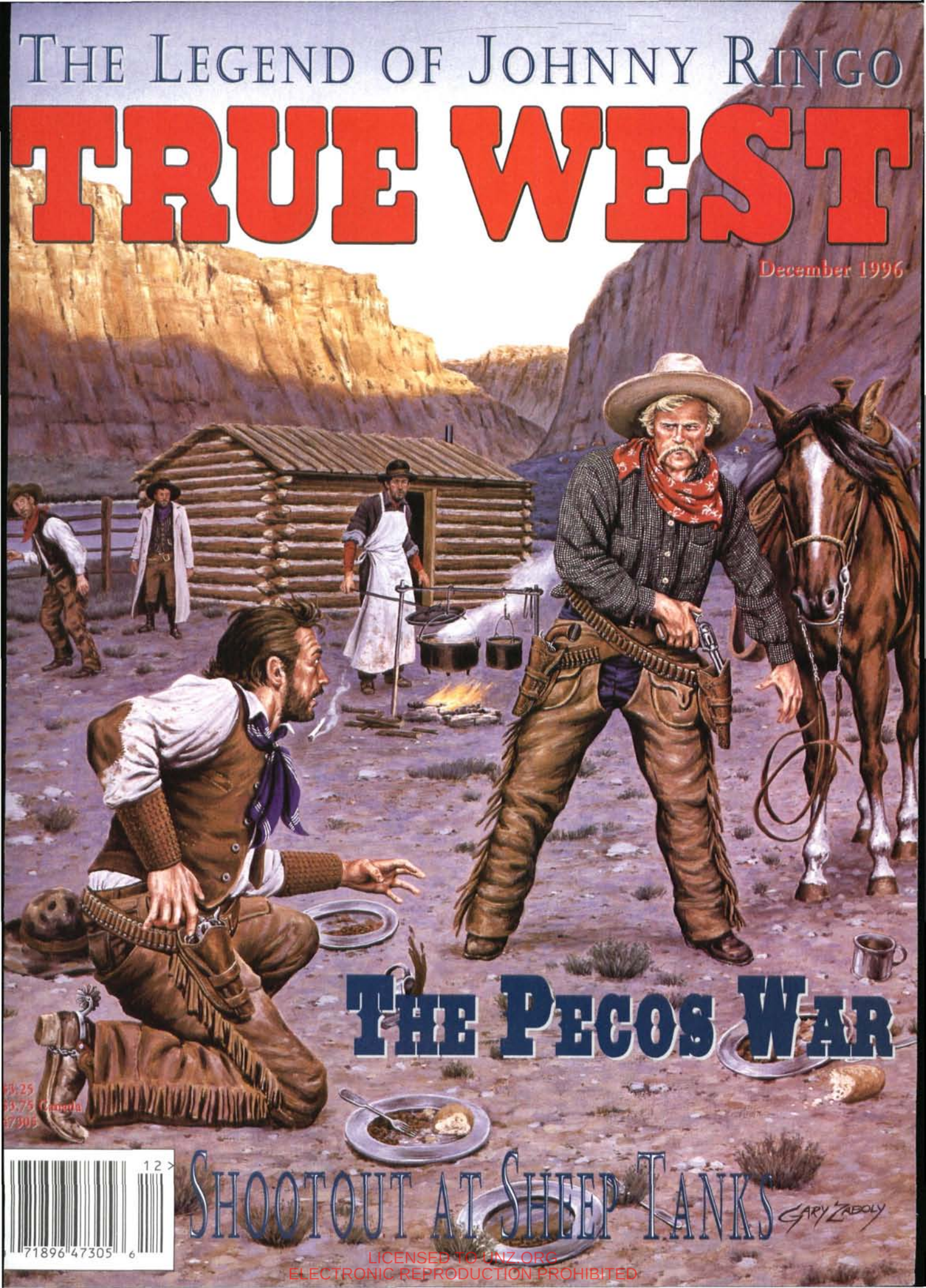
THE LEGEND OF JOHNNY RINGO

TRUE WEST

December 1996



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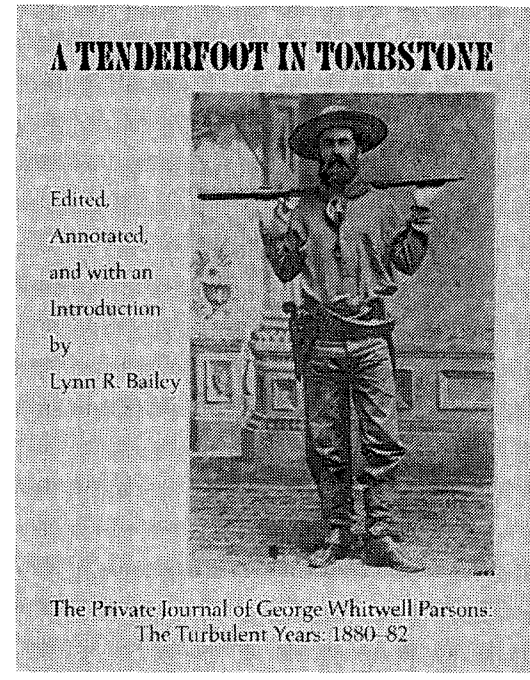
The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons: The Turbulent Years, 1880–82

Edited, Annotated, and with Introduction and Index

By Lynn R. Bailey

Author of *Bisbee, Queen of the Copper Camps, Old Reliable, The Search for Lopez,* and *We'll All Wear Silk Hats,* etc.



George Whitwell Parsons was an Easterner, trained as a banker, who wanted to carve a niche for himself in hardrock mining. To do so, he picked one of America's most isolated silver camps, Tombstone in Arizona Territory. Although he failed to find his El Dorado in southeastern Arizona, and never left an enduring mark on the region, he presented a priceless account of everyday life in Tombstone during its heyday.

George recorded not only his daily struggles in mining, but the ups-and-downs of the tempestuous community. Once he got used to the town's rough edges, Parsons became a community and county activist. He spearheaded a movement to build a Presbyterian church and bring ministers to Tombstone. As a member of the Citizens Safety Committee, he fought the fraudulent actions of the Tombstone Townsite Company and became an outspoken advocate for a no-nonsense approach to curbing the lawlessness then sweeping southeastern Arizona. His observations regarding crime and the town's response to it, as well as the Earp-cowboy vendetta have been quoted over and over again. In fall of 1881 Parsons joined a group of Tombstoners in a chase across the Sulphur Springs Valley to head off marauding Apaches before they escaped into Mexico. His comments regarding this sojourn are especially pertinent, when one considers that a month later members of this group would shoot it out on a Tombstone street.

George Parsons' journal offers much more than a glimpse into personal and political machinations. He brings forth the town's cosmopolitan atmosphere. It had two daily newspapers, and national theatrical troupes augmented hometown performances in a half dozen theaters. Restaurant food ran the gambit from bland Irish and Welsh fare to French cuisine. Ice cream and oysters were readily procurable, thanks to refrigeration. Besides offering a wealth of information on daily life in Tombstone, George's journal sheds great insight into community leadership with portraits of John Clum, J. V. Vickers, Dr. George Goodfellow, Michael Gray, Philip Morse, William H. Bayless, the Girds, and religious leaders Endicott Peabody and Joseph McIntyre. Added to this, Parsons presents a fascinating picture of emerging commerce, particularly the rigors of small-scale mining in the Tombstone District and in the Huachuca Mountains. Last but not least, George Parsons emerges from his journal as a complex man, with contrasting traits; tenacity being his dominant quality. And thanks to that tenacity he left the only available journal bearing upon Tombstone's early years.

This entertaining and compelling journal, first transcribed by the WPA in 1932 and published in 1972, has been redesigned and set in type. Obvious errors which crept into the WPA transcription have been corrected, and an introduction added, which casts light on George Parsons' background, personality and his eventful life after leaving Tombstone. Annotations and an index compliment the volume, as do engravings taken from the *Arizona Quarterly Illustrated* and the *Mining and Scientific Press,* two contemporary publications. This attractively designed hard cover book of 273 pages is composed in 6" x 9" format. It has printed endsheets and the dust jacket is in color. This is Volume 65 of Westernlore's Great West and Indian Series. ISBN 0-87026-095-2. As this edition is limited to 1,000 copies only, we suggest you reserve your book now. Price: $36.95

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TRUE WEST

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Whole No. 344

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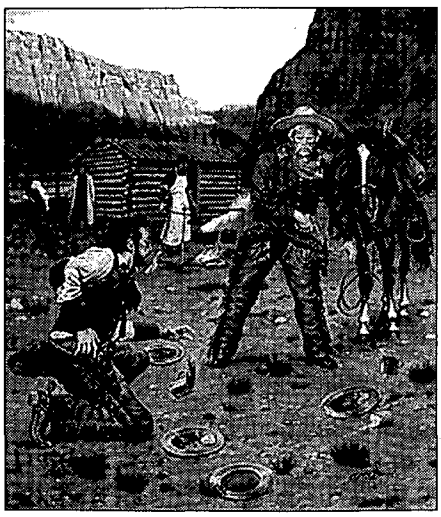

Our Cover

Jim Highsaw confronts Pecos War cattle rustler Dick Smith.
By Gary Zaboly

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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, ya'll!

Well, I'm kinda stuck in the middle on this 'un. I wanted to use my two columns to wish you fine folks a happy holiday season and jaw a bit about old Saint Nick since it's that time of year, but it looks like I need to do some good old fashioned commercializing, explaining, and introducing instead.

Our phones have been ringing off the hook with questions about *John Ringo*, the newest production from Barbed Wire Press and author David Johnson, so I thought I would tell ya'll a bit about it.

Of all the characters to came out of the Tombstone tale, John Ringo has remained for many the most enigmatic. Ringo has been depicted as a brooding loner, a laughing homicidal maniac reminiscent of William Bonney, and even a Shakespeare-quoting gunslinger, faster than the wind itself. None of these labels can really explain why the American public has remained so interested in a character as marginal as he. Perhaps it's because his name has a certain "Ringo" to it, or more likely, because 114 years after his body was found propped under a tree, his life, and death, still remain a mystery. Until now.

David Johnson has spent the last twenty years pulling every skeleton out of the Ringo family closet and has compiled his findings to create a book that will be pulled from the shelf as an important reference for years to come.

We decided to give you a small, very small, peek at some of the information Johnson has found by having him write the *True West* Legends piece this month. Of course we couldn't include everything due to space, but Johnson still manages to give you a taste of the man who was Ringo. For a better glimpse at the man and the legend that surrounds him, I highly recommend you plunk down some change and order *John Ringo*. Since Christmas is on the horizon you might want to order an extra copy for that certain someone who always wants to read over your shoulder.

Next on my list of things to do is some explaining and apologizing. We had a little problem with our November issue. What happened was pretty simple. We ran out of those paper covers that keep your magazine from getting mangled and looking like it got shot from a shotgun. The only thing we could do was stick the mailing labels right smack dab on the cover. That got more than a few of you angry. We have the problem whipped now and hopefully this issue arrived safe and sound. If not, give us a ring and we'll make things right.

Finally, I need to introduce a new hand here at Western. When John Joerschke left to become a freelance wrangler of words, it became apparent that I would need some help around here. I knew right off that there was only one man for the job, Chuck Kennedy.

Chuck is Oklahoma born and raised. He spent his youth on a dusty farm in Lamont, Oklahoma, and when other kids were playing cowboy, Chuck was branding cattle and breaking horses. His work ethic is simple and he's pretty durned funny to have around.

I have known Chuck since he was *my* editor way back in college and with one phone call he agreed to give up his job driving a chemical truck and come back to journalism. He didn't put up much fight.

Things were rough at first because he had to learn the computer system, meet two back-to-back deadlines, and put up with my constant talking while he was trying to work, but soon he was just another greased wheel on our wagon. You might drop him a line and welcome him aboard. He looks plumb sad when the mail pouch comes in and there's nothing for him.

Marcus Huff

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Barbed Wire E-mail and Popeye's Kin

I came across your web page and found it a friendly place. I like the bit about "this might take a short time but you'll enjoy the pictures." Most [Internet] users think that when they click that mouse it should run right in and get that picture. They forget that although this is the information superhighway, some of the old phone lines are still hung up with barbed wire and when it rains or is too hot it just doesn't transmit that signal too fast.—*Cork Quasne, via the Internet.*

Editor's Note: I'm mighty glad you enjoyed our web site. We can go weeks and not get any response even though 70-100 people visit each day. For you folks who may have missed it, our Internet address is www.cowboy.net/western. Maybe if we put more pictures of nice looking ladies instead of all those mean gunslingers we would get more e-mail. Wadda ya think?

Trail Done Got Lost

Whatever happened to your feature, "Trails Grown Dim" and its counterpart in *Old West?* I look forward to each exciting issue of *True West* and *Old West.* Keep up the good work for many years to come!—*Jack Borders, Alexandria, Alabama.*

Editor's Note: Well, Jack, as near as we can figure, all those fine folks who wrote in to "Trails Grown Dim" must've found who they were looking for. We just don't get as many letters these days from folks trying to find lost kin, friends, and heroes. Maybe your letter will help spur a few toward our mail pouch.

Well Blow Me Down!

I've been wondering if the Gary Zaboly who painted the cover illustration for the September 1996 issue of *True West* could some how be related to the "B. Zaboly" who took over the drawing of the "Thimble Theater" (Popeye) comic strip after the demise of its originator, Elzie Segar?—*Dick Robbins, Chauncey, Ohio.*

Editor's Note: You must have a mighty wide hammer, pardner, 'cause you hit that nail right on the head. Gary was delighted that someone made the connection and informed us that "B. Zaboly" was his father's cousin, Bill. Bill penned Popeye and the Thimble Theater bunch back in the 1930s and now Gary is continuing the family tradition by doing great work for us here in the 90s. Just take a look at this month's cover. Hey...doesn't that cowboy's forearm look kinda big?

James Site Revisited

I have driven by the Jesse James Historical site northwest of Greenfield, Iowa, in Adair County many times, so a few days ago I decided to stop and take a few pictures.

I subscribe to *True West* and thought maybe a few of the other readers would also like to see what the location of the first train robbery by the famous James gang looks like today.—*Brad Miller,*

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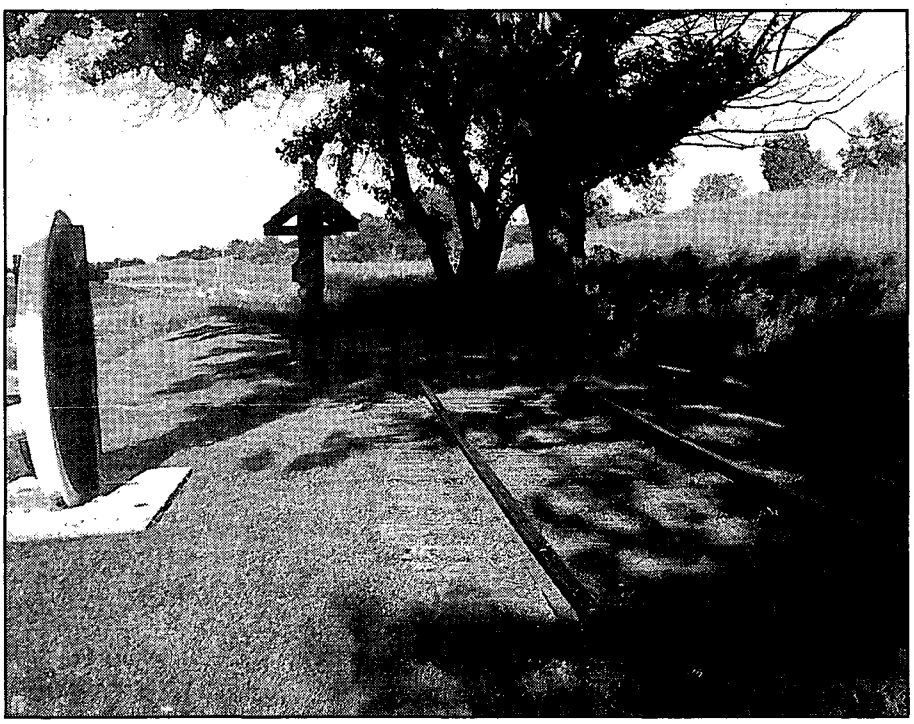

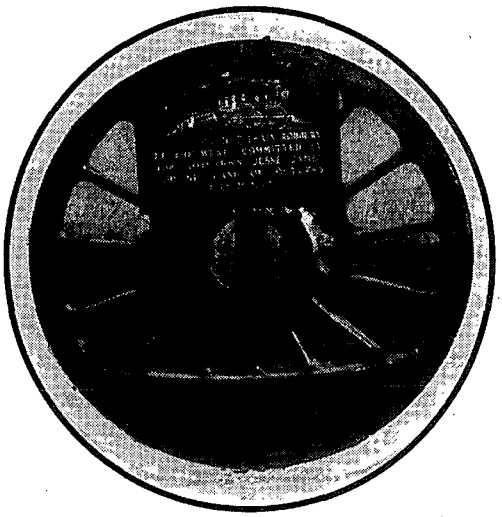

Historical marker, upper right, at the site of the first train robbery in the West, committed by Jesse James near Greenfield, Iowa, July 21, 1873. Photos courtesy of reader Brad Miller.

Your letters and comments are welcome. Please keep letters to 300 words or less. All letters received by Western Publications will be considered for publication unless otherwise stipulated in the letter. Space does not permit us to print all letters we receive. Be sure to include full name, address, and zip code. Photos are welcome. Address all letters to Western Publications, PO Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. E-mail us at, Western@cowboy.net. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot forward correspondence to people whose letters appear in "Truly Western."

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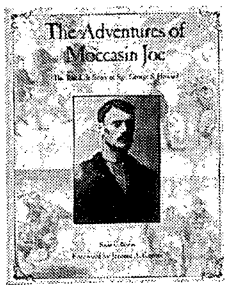

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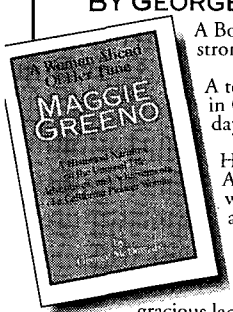

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ROCK CREEK STA

History still lives at Rock Creek Station, a 350-acre state historical park near Fairbury in southeastern Nebraska. Wagon ruts left by emigrants on the California-Oregon Trail remain visible, and buildings and a toll bridge have been reconstructed at the road ranch that served as a stage, freight, and Pony Express station.

And it was here that a stable hand was involved in a bloody shoot-out and began his journey into history as "Wild Bill" Hickok.

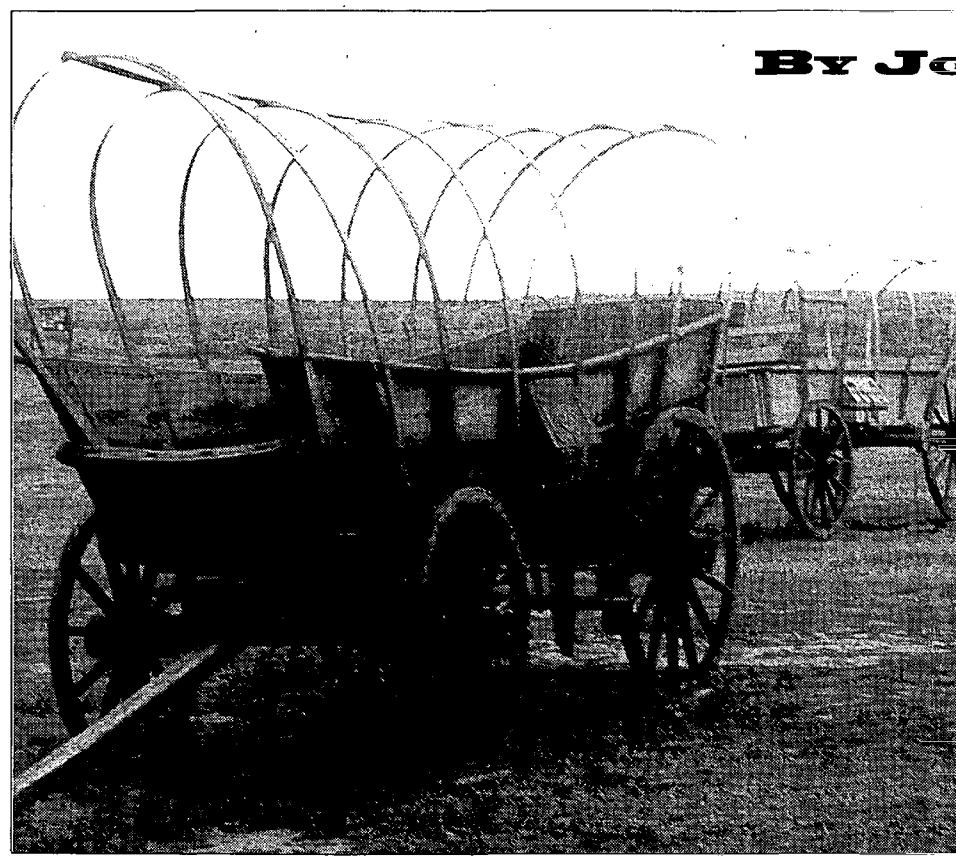
Established in 1857 by S.C. Glenn, Rock Creek Station was originally only a small cabin, lean-to, and barn west of the creek. Two years later, however, Dave McCanles bought the station and built a log cabin and well on the east side of Rock Creek. Later, he added a toll bridge across the creek, charging ten to fifteen cents to cross.

In 1860, McCanles rented, then later sold, the East Ranch to the freighting firm Russell, Majors and Waddel, and the station became a Pony Express swing station. The next year, James Butler Hickok was hired as a stable hand. In July, he would make Rock Creek Station forever a part of the history of the American West.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission began developing Rock Creek Station in 1980. The East and West Ranch sites were excavated by archaeologists, and buildings and corrals were reconstructed.

A self-guided tour takes visitors across the grounds, a beautiful park of prairie hilltops, cedars, rocky creek bottoms, and ravines. A stone replica of the 1865 post office has been built, and the reconstructed

BY JG



East Ranch Cabin, site of the Hickok-McCanles fight, Rock Creek Station, Nebraska.

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ON: HICKOK FOUGHT HERE

West Ranch cabin is open for interpretation.

The toll bridge's remains were found during the original excavation, but by crossing the reconstructed wood bridge, a visitor can understand how McCanles was able to charge travelers up to fifty cents to cross (if he thought they could afford it). Rock Creek remains steep, rocky, and prone to flooding.

The West Ranch includes the Pony Express barn, with a blacksmith area, tack room, and hostler's quarters. The barn was reconstructed by using a photo taken of the ranch in 1860. Next to the dam is the bunk house, which includes a cooking area. And then there's the East Ranch cabin, which is probably what most visitors come to see.

On July 12, 1861, McCanles went to the cabin to get money from station manager Horace Wellman. That much is known; the rest has been hotly debated and is still open to conjecture.

It is known that Hickok shot McCanles, then wounded James Woods and James Gordon when they came running from the barn area. The motive for the shooting has been hotly debated. Only those who were there know for sure what happened.

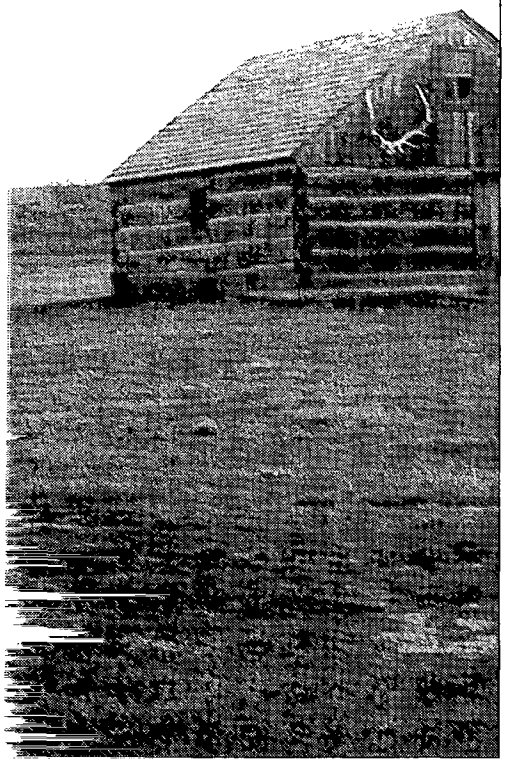
Restoration continues at Rock Creek Station with work on the toll cabin east of the creek. The buildings, complete with reproduction furnishings, are open for inspection, and an interpretive center adds insight to the station's history.

A Nebraska Park Entry Permit ($2.50 daily or $14 annual) is required to enter the park, and camping is also available for $7 or $10. The park also offers picnic and playground areas and hiking and horseback trails. The interpretive center is sometimes closed during the off season, but the park is open year-round.

For more information, write Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, RR 4, Box 36, Fairbury, Nebraska 68352-9413. The phone number is (402) 729-5777.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least four months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

NY D. BOGGS



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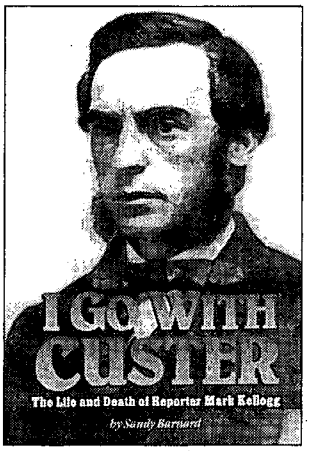

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150 Years Ago

December 7, 1846: San Pasqual, California. Kit Carson guided General Stephen Kearny and about 120 officers and men into California; arriving on December 2, at the ranch of Jonathan T. Warner, about sixty miles northeast of San Diego. A few days later the column marched on toward San Diego, but at the village of San Pasqual, the Americans encountered Captain Andres Pico and eighty lancers. Carson rode with an advance guard commanded by Captain Abraham Johnston. When they were joined by General Kearny and a small escort, Kearny ordered a charge. Seeing only twenty Americans charging his command, Pico held his men firm.

"Viva California!" shouted Pico's lancers as they triggered a musket volley.

Captain Johnston was shot in the forehead and another dragoon was fatally wounded. Carson's galloping horse stumbled and fell, and Kit's rifle was broken in the fall. Soon he seized a riderless horse and rejoined the attack as the Mexicans retreated.

The lancers wheeled and met their attackers with the weapon that gave them their name. The ensuing combat was vicious, saber against lance, and the Americans were badly mauled. General Kearny was lanced twice, and would have been killed if his assailant had not been shot by one of Kearny's officers.

The remainder of Kearny's force, including two howitzers, arrived, and Pico withdrew from the field. But nearly a score of Americans had been slain and almost as many wounded. All but two of the dead had been killed by lancing, while many of the wounded had suffered multiple lance wounds.

The Americans camped on the battlefield and began to regroup. The next day there was a sudden charge by the lancers, but they were driven away by volley fire. A few days

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later Kearny and his men finally reached San Diego.

December 25. 1846: Watertown, Wisconsin. William Milton Breakenridge was born in Wisconsin. He left home as a teenager to go west, arriving in Colorado in time to participate in the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. By the late 1870s his travels took him to Arizona, Where he served as a Cochise County deputy sheriff during Tombstone's most notorious period. There were other law enforcement jobs, along with work as a rancher and with the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1928 he published his reminiscences in *Helldorado* basking in the book's publicity until his death in 1931 in Tucson.

Wyatt Earp, who refereed the controversial Fitzsimmons-Sharkey fight in 1896.

125 Years Ago

December 4, 1871: near Cheyenne, Wyoming. The northbound morning train from Denver was halted by snowdrifts two miles before reaching Cheyenne. Horse-drawn sleighs were dispatched to bring the stranded passengers into town. Just over a week later, on December 13, Cheyenne's hotel for railroad passengers was destroyed by fire, and the Union Pacific had no insurance on the $25,000 hostelry.

December 6, 1871: Tucson, Arizona. A military telegraph line reached Tucson, and a dance was held that night to celebrate the event.

December 10, 1871: Phoenix, Arizona. A small adobe settlement had grown up near Fort McDowell. Englishman Darrel Duppa named the frontier village Phoenix, for the mythical bird. By 1871, promoters were attempting to develop a townsite just to the west of the cluster of adobes, and on December 10, the first lots were offered for sale. Phoenix became the seat of newly organized Maricopa County, and within a decade the population exceeded 1,700. In 1889, after the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the territorial capital was moved from Prescott to growing Phoenix.

December 13, 1871: Abilene, Kansas. Abilene City Marshal Wild Bill Hickok "and all of his Deputies" were discharged by the city council. Hickok had been on the job since April at a monthly salary of $150. James A. Guthrie was hired as a replacement for just $50 per month. Two months earlier Hickok had fatally wounded Texas gambler Phil Coe and, accidentally, his own deputy. Now that the cattle season was over, the controversial and expensive lawman was no longer needed.

December 25, 1871: San Francisco, California. Civil War veteran Ambrose Pierce, author and columnist, married Ellen Day in a Christmas wedding.

1871: Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. In 1871, the year he turned twenty-two, John Larn was involved in at least three fatal shoot-outs. On a Colorado ranch where he worked, Larn quarreled over a horse with the owner of the spread. Larn angrily pulled his revolver and killed his boss, then fled south.

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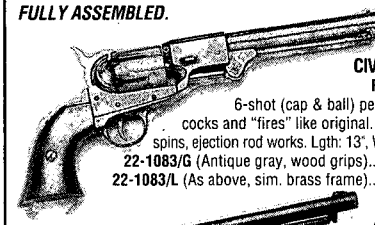

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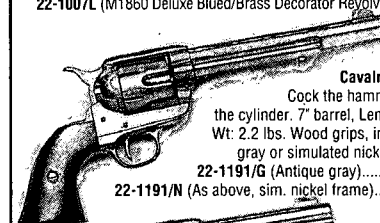

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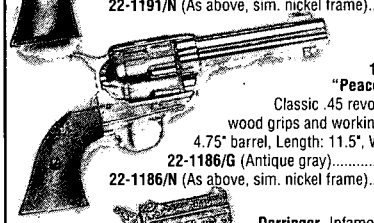

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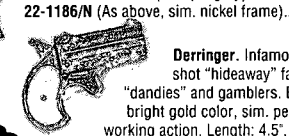

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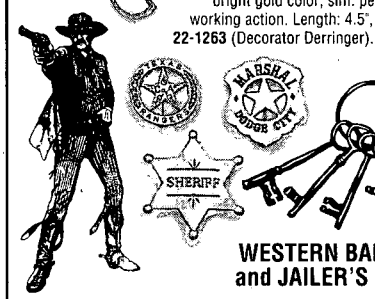

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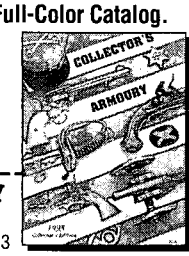

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On the run in New Mexico, Larn encountered, a sheriff who became suspicious. Taking no chances, Larn gunned down the lawman and headed for Texas. At Fort Griffin he signed on with rancher Bill Hays, and late in the year Larn led a violence-filled trail drive to Colorado.

Rumored to have killed a vaquero early in the drive, at the Pecos River Larn clashed with two other Mexicans. Larn shot the two men to death, then ordered their bodies thrown into the Pecos "to feed the catfish."

Larn soon began his own ranch near Fort Griffin and started a family. In 1876 he was elected county sheriff, but he engaged in rustling and after ambushing a neighboring rancher in 1878, Larn was arrested and lynched.

100 Years Ago

December 2, 1896: San Francisco, California. A scheduled prize fight between Bob Fitzsimmons and Tom Sharkey saw the hard-hitting Fitzsimmons heavily favored by gamblers. On the day of the bout, however, betting switched to Sharkey as word went out that the fight was fixed.

On the night of December 2, 14,000 spectators jammed into Mechanics' Pavilion, San Francisco's largest building. At ten o'clock the pugilists climbed into the ring, followed by a surprise choice as referee —Wyatt Earp. A longtime gambler, Earp had lived in the Bay area since 1890, and was currently involved in harness racing. The former frontier peace officer was packing a revolver, and immediately he was disarmed by a policeman.

During the fight many fans felt that referee Earp ignored numerous fouls by Sharkey. But in the eighth round Fitzsimmons floored Sharkey with a body punch. Sharkey clutched his groin as he went down, whereupon Earp declared him the winner because of foul, then quickly left the ring.

"I was simply robbed out of the $10,000 [purse] by that decision," complained Fitzsimmons. A great many people, especially those who had bet on "Ruby Robert," agreed.

Fitzsimmons tried to sue for the purse, but the judge threw out the case because prize fighting was illegal in California. Earp, who was fined fifty dollars for carrying a concealed weapon, was widely blamed for a "fix," although crooked fights are difficult to prove. There was a rematch in 1900 and the thirty-eight-year-old Fitzsimmons knocked out the twenty-six-year-old Sharkey in the second round. A third and final pairing was staged the next year, but it was only a friendly exhibition.

December 4, 1896: near Newkirk, Oklahoma. Dan "Dynamite Dick"

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Clifton was a member of Bill Doolin's gang who escaped with Doolin from jail in Guthrie on July 5, 1896. Doolin was slain by a posse on August 25, but Clifton remained at large, finding refuge on the Sid Williams farm, sixteen miles outside Newkirk.

There he was located by Deputy United States Marshals George Lawson and W. H. Bussey. They intercepted him on horseback on December 4, but when they called for his surrender he opened fire with a Winchester. A slug from Lawson's rifle broke Clifton's arm and knocked him out of his saddle, but he escaped on foot into the brush.

By dark the lawmen had trailed him to a cabin in the woods. As they closed in he burst out the door, firing as he ran. The officers gunned him down. He died within minutes.

50 Years Ago

December 3, 1946: Hollywood, California. December 3 was the premiere date of the Western film, *My Darling Clementine*, Director John Ford's version of the Tombstone-OK Corral troubles. Henry Fonda starred as Wyatt Earp, backed by massive Victor Mature as a robust Doc Holliday, Ward Bond as Morgan Earp, Tim Holt as Virgil Earp, and Walter Brennan as Old Man Clanton. Although John Ford had talked with Wyatt Earp about the dramatic events portrayed in the movie, there are many glaring historical errors, such as the death of Doc Holliday (who is portrayed as a surgeon, not a dentist!) at the OK Corral. But, despite its historical flaws, *My Darling Clementine*, atmospheric and entertaining, became regarded as a classic Western motion picture.

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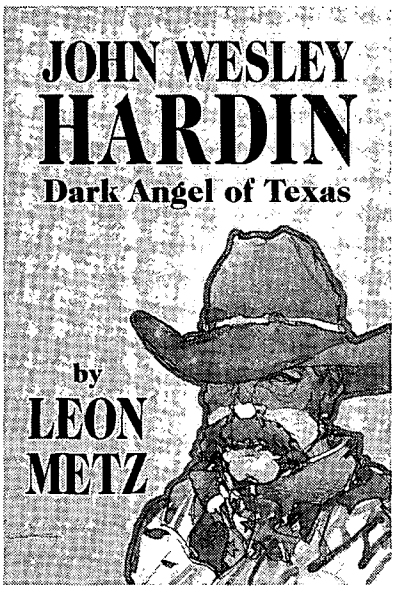

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PART II

The Man W

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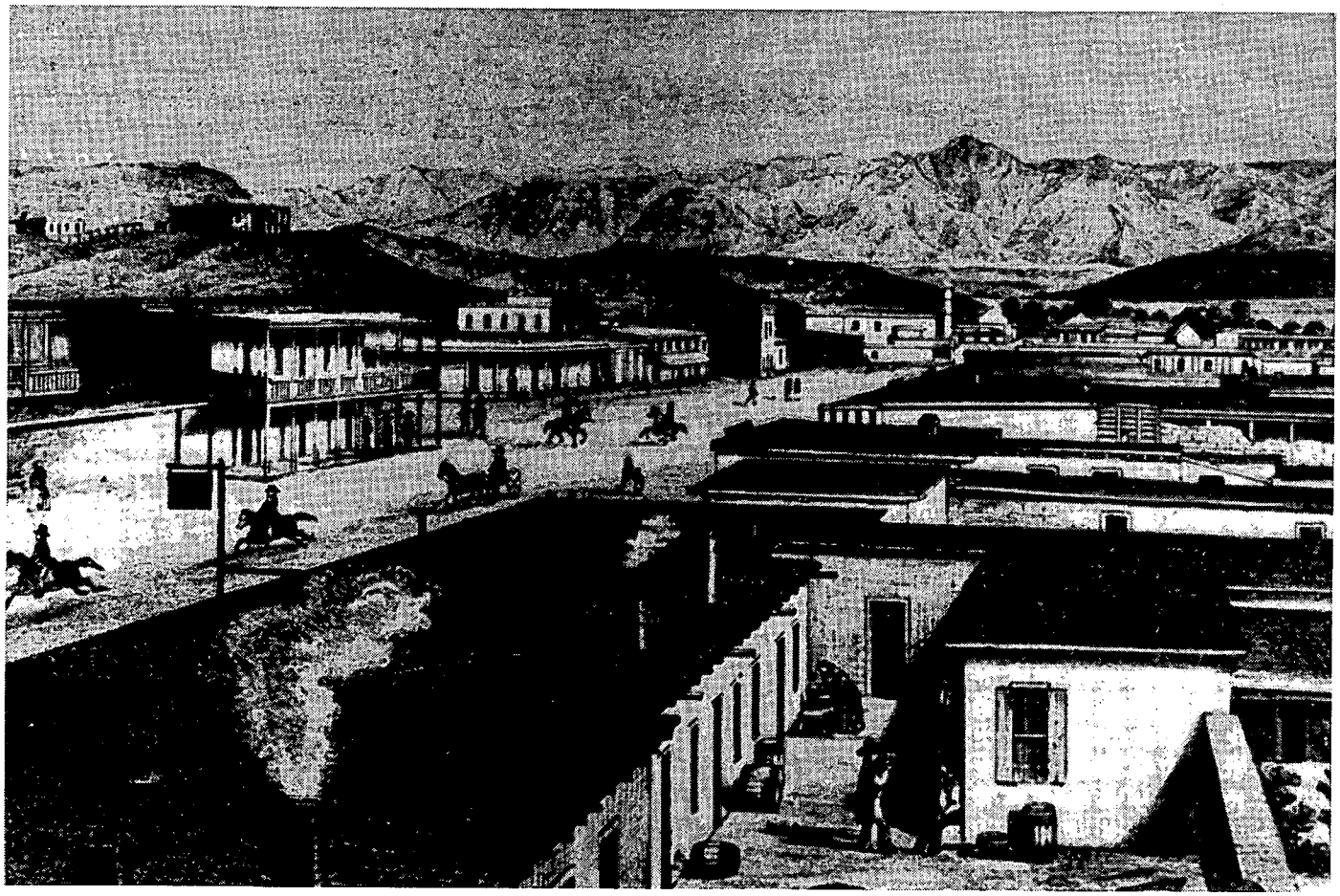

California Historical Society

Los Angeles in the early 1860s was still largely an adobe town. Large ranchos were scattered across the land.

Editor's Note: *Murderer, thief, and rustler Charlie Wilkins had been lucky so far.*

He had participated in the 1857 slaughter of a wagon train, resulting in the death of 120 men and women. He then began to run with a group of stock thieves and narrowly avoided capture by a Los Angeles posse that caught the rest of the rustlers.

When the law finally did catch up with Wilkins it was for a charge of assault with a deadly weapon. He was sentenced to two years in California's San Quentin Prison, but promptly escaped and went back to his evil ways.

Wilkins had already killed two more men by the time he met California rancher John Sanford and killed him for twenty dollars and a gold watch. So far Wilkins had been fortunate in escaping punishment for his crimes but his luck was running out. Writer William Secrest continues with the tale of, "The Man Who Escaped":

The body of John Sanford was quickly discovered and the melancholy news reported in the *Los Angeles Star* of December 12:

ANOTHER MURDER.

We are again compelled to record another murder which was committed near the borders of this county on Sunday last. P. Banning, Esq., on Monday, received a telegram from Fort Tejon announcing that John Sanford Esq. had been murdered by an American, on Sunday, near Kern Lake, and the murderer had escaped....

Mr. Sanford was returning to his sheep ranch in a buggy when he was met by two Americans who inquired of him if he could give them work. He replied yes, that they could herd sheep for him, and invited one of them to get in the buggy and ride to the ranch

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no Escaped

Secrest

with him, leaving the other one to walk. After driving a short distance the one in the buggy drew a revolver and shot Mr. Sanford through the back of the head, killing him instantly. The murderer was seen on Sunday last at 4 PM passing Fort Tejon coming in this direction, but it was not known at that time that the murder had been committed. The sheriff of this county, immediately on receipt of the news, offered a reward of two hundred dollars for the arrest of the murderer whose name is John Peters. The troops and citizens of Fort Tejon turned out en masse in search of the criminal, and parties have left here in the same direction, and we trust that their search will not be in vain. Mr. Sanford was a resident of Stockton.

Charles Wilkins had picked a particularly bad time to commit a murder. Fed up with the growing crime rate of the past few years, Los Angelenos were determined to do something about it. City Marshal Billy Warren, Undersheriff Frank King, and others were efficient lawmen, but were overwhelmed with the desperate characters of the area. Then as now, the wheels of justice turned much too slowly. Lawyers were plentiful and too often desperadoes were turned loose on technicalities or lack of evidence. Worse yet, the substantial men of the community avoided jury duty so that often it was the irresponsible and criminal sympathizers who made up jury panels. It was in this climate of fear and apprehension that vigilantes began to assemble and quickly sought to serve up their own brand of justice.

The *Star* of November 21 ran a brief item which proved to be the fuse that ignited a powder keg:

AFFRAY

An affray took place in the early part of the week, during which officer Heater was inhumanly beaten, the most serious wounds having been inflicted on his head. There are hopes of his recovery. Six of those engaged in the affair have, we understand, been lodged in jail.

University of California at Los Angeles, Special Collections

The execution of Boss Dainwood and his companions by vigilantes outside the Los Angeles jail.

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The incident took place when five or six thugs led by one Boston "Boss" Dainwood caught Constable R.A. Hester on the street one day. Hester had arrested some of the group before, and when the gang surrounded him he must have known what was coming. A burly brute, Dainwood told his men to keep anyone from interfering, then promptly attacked the officer. Pummeled from every side, Hester quickly went down, where he was savagely kicked and beaten about the head until he no longer moved. The thugs were so intent on the beating that they failed to notice the arrival of other officers, who quickly covered Dainwood and his cronies with their pistols and hauled them off to jail.

Dainwood was typical of the desperadoes infesting the area. A former Los Angeles police officer, Dainwood decided there was more money on the other side of the law and put together a gang of thieves and thugs to prey on the southern part of the state. Bandit and killer George Strong worked with Dainwood prior to this time and mentioned some of their crimes in a memoir. Strong, P.T. Herleman, John Morgan, and two men named "Red" and Baker were hanging around El Monte, near Los Angeles, at the time:

> Some few days after I joined the boys...we were joined by Boss Dainwood. We then stole two horses from Pio Pico, two saddles, eleven robes from different places, a couple of mules, four head of horses from another man and went about three miles to a canyon back of old Billy Rubottom's where we stayed some time. Part of our company started for the Colorado country, that is Dainwood, Red and Smith, while Baker, Morgan, Shultz, Herleman and myself stayed behind....

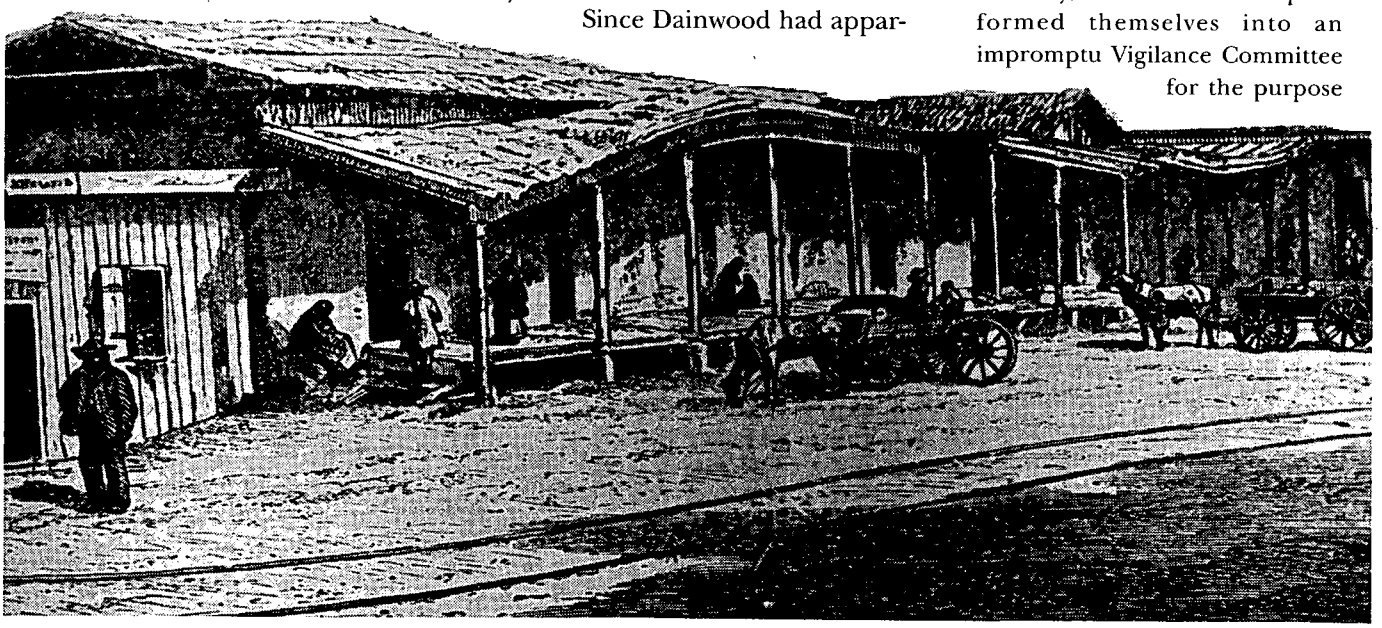
Later, when the gang regrouped at Weaver's Diggings in Arizona, Dainwood killed Morgan in a dispute. He was also charged with the murder of two men at La Paz. When the gang decided to return to Los Angeles, they met a Mexican packer on the desert and began helping themselves to his property. When he objected, he was brutally shot down and killed by Dainwood. The gang apparently split up at this time, probably because Arizona posses were looking for them. In Los Angeles, it was a new gang composed of Dainwood, Ed Chase, Jose Olivas, Pedro Ybarra and Andrew Wood who had beaten Constable Hester so badly. Wood, of course, was the ex-soldier whom Wilkins had encouraged to become a highwayman.

Since Dainwood had apparently attempted to kill Constable Hester and had made threats against others in the community, a group of citizens held a meeting. The results were briefly chronicled in the *Star,* November 28, 1863:

> A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE
>
> On Saturday morning last, a number of armed citizens marched to the county jail, demanded the keys from the Sheriff and on these being refused, commenced breaking the iron doors. There were, we presume, about two hundred persons in the crowd. Having overpowered the officers, and made good their entrance, they led out five men, who were held as prisoners, and executed them by hanging in front of the building. This in brief, is the history of the occasion....

The *Star* came out strongly against such justice and utilized more column space denouncing the affair than they did in describing the lynching itself. A Los Angeles resident, writing to the *Visalia Times Delta* on November 21, gave a more graphic account of the proceedings:

> WHOLESALE HANGING IN LOS ANGELES
>
> At an early hour this morning, Saturday, the citizens of this place formed themselves into an impromptu Vigilance Committee for the purpose



Author's Collection

The infamous Calle de los Negros in Los Angeles where Wilkins and other desperadoes gambled and fought.

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of dealing summary justice to a band of cut-throats confined in the county jail of this city. At 10 o'clock the procession, some three hundred strong, armed to the teeth, marched to the jail yard, when they were met by Sheriff Sanchez and Undersheriff King, who expostulated with the crowd and used every exertion in their power to preserve the peace of the city, but to no avail....

After a two-hour sledge hammering, the jail door gave in and the five prisoners were led out. They were swiftly lynched from the roof of the corridor in front of the jail. The account continued:

> Five more villainous looking cut-throats was probably never seen in this or any other country. This wholesale slaughter may not be sanctioned by the community at large, but the citizens of this section have borne the outrages committed by this band until forbearance ceased to be a virtue....The Vigilantes gave every suspicious character so many hours to leave the country, or take the consequences. All business places are closed. The whole affair passed off with but little or no excitement.

Harris Newmark was present at the lynching and described the last moments of young Andrew Wood: "A large empty case was secured as a platform on which the victim was to stand and I shall never forget the spectacle of the youth, apparently oblivious of his impending doom, as he placed his hands upon the box and vaulted lightly to the top (just as he might have done at an innocent gymnastic contest), and his parting salutation, 'I'm going to die a game hen-chicken.'"

Wilkins had meanwhile fled the scene of the Sanford murder and headed towards Los Angeles. After stopping at Gorman's place, he proceeded to the San Fernando Valley where he left his horse at a ranch and walked to Santa Barbara where he arrived about December 14. Feeling he was safe on the coast and so far from the scene of the crime, Wilkins stayed at a hotel that night. In the morning he left town by a side road, but was followed by a man named Bartlett who thought the stranger resembled the description of Sanford's murderer.

Stopping Wilkins on the road, Bartlett began asking him questions, and the killer realized the situation he was in. They came together in a desperate struggle, with Wilkins getting the better of his opponent and knocking him down. Bartlett struck his head on a stone as he fell, but grabbed the stone and soon battered Wilkins into submission. Tying his prisoner's hands, Bartlett searched his blanket roll and found Sanford's watch and pistol with its silver nameplate. He was sure he had the killer.

Bartlett and his prisoner caught the first stagecoach for Los Angeles, the murderer whiling away the tedious, long trip by confessing all his crimes to his captor. Bartlett

Author's Collection

Phineas Banning developed the port at San Pedro and organized stagecoach and railroad lines from Los Angeles. When he failed in shooting Wilkins in court, Banning had him lynched in a local corral.

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later remarked that the confession "would fill a volume."

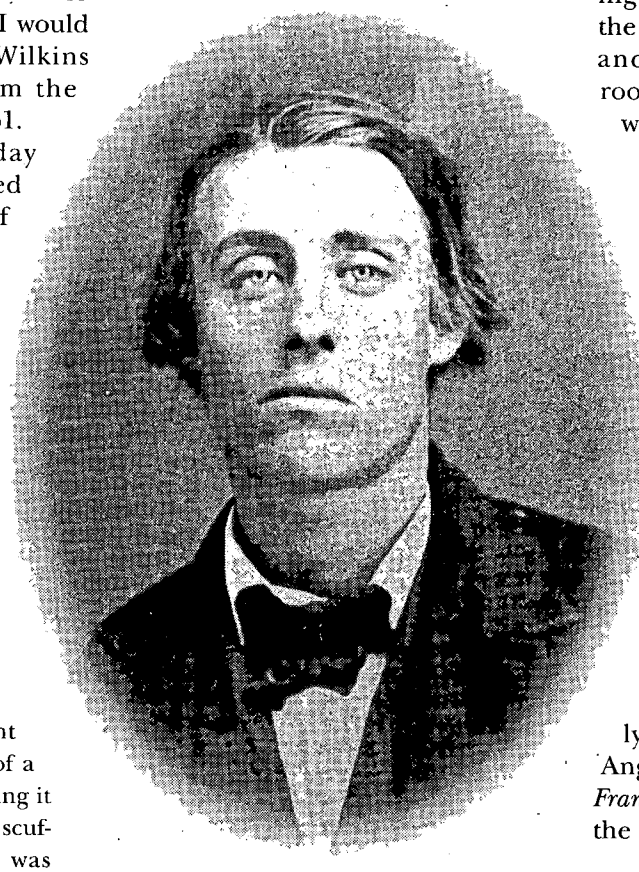
Arriving in Los Angeles on December 16, Bartlett delivered the murderer to Sheriff Tomas Sanchez who locked him up. Wilkins freely admitted the Sanford murder, saying he had killed him without even knowing if he had any money. When someone asked if the murder of Sanford and others didn't bother his conscience, the brute only shrugged. "No," he said, "I think no more of killing a man than I would a dog!" At this time also Wilkins mentioned his escape from the Warren posse in October 1861.

The following day Undersheriff King conducted Wilkins to the courtroom of Judge Ben-jamin Hayes for his preliminary hearing. Large crowds were gathered outside and within. As they were walking down the aisle towards the bench, King caught a hostile movement in the crowd, as reported in the *Star:*

> Accident — On Thursday morning last, as the prisoner Wilkins was being carried before the District Court, Mr. Frank King caught hold of a gun in the hands of a Mr. Beardslee who was directing it towards the prisoner. In the scuffle which ensued, the gun was accidentally discharged and both, we regret to say, were shot: Beardslee in both legs, and King in the foot. The wounds were, however, slight, and we are happy to say they will soon be well.

In the confusion after the shooting, Wilkins sprinted for a door and disappeared into a nearby house. He was soon apprehended, however, and brought back to court where he faced the judge for his arraignment. Shaken by the incident, the killer quickly pled guilty to the murder, anxious no doubt to get back to the relative safety of his cell. He was ordered to return to court the following day for sentencing.

Whether Beardslee was a person, or just a typographical error of the *Star,* is unclear. Whatever happened, the incident was quickly glossed over. And for good reason. The gunman was not someone named Beardslee, but one of the pillars of the community, the prominent and wealthy transportation baron of Southern California, Phineas Banning! There is no doubt of this.



Author's Collection

Charles Wilkins as he appeared in a police mug shot taken on his way to San Quentin.

Harris Newmark witnessed Banning's assault that day and later wrote of it:

> Banning was overcome by the tragedies endured by his wife in recent months. We can only imagine how guilty he must have felt that it was his ship that had blown up and killed her other brother, even though it was an accident that could not have been prevented. The murder of Rebecca's brother John, however, was something he could deal with. He felt an overwhelming rage that desperadoes could roam the area and commit such heartless crimes. Wilkins' confessions must have been the breaking point. He had killed Sanford for a mere twenty dollars, before he even knew if he had any money at all!

Seeking to avoid another shooting incident, Judge Hayes cleared the court before dismissing Wilkins and the attending officers. The room was empty, but outside there was continued shouting and cursing by the mob of bystanders. The officers and prisoner were just moving towards the door when the screaming crowd burst into the room and, pushing aside the lawmen, seized the wide-eyed prisoner. Kicking and yelling, Wilkins was carried from the room by Phineas Banning and a group of his teamsters. Gathering around a gate at Banning's corral, Wilkins was hanged by "as excited a crowd of men as it was ever my lot to see," reported an eyewitness.

The *Star* barely gave the lynching a few lines, but a Los Angeles correspondent of the *San Francisco Bulletin* was quite moved by the terrible scene:

> The hanging over, justice done, without any quibbles or evasions, or escape — but swift, sure and certain, the people became calm and all excitement soon passed away. The remembrance of that day, with its exciting scenes, of which that hardened man, yet young, was the central figure, is like a bad dream. Such scenes are sad, but sadder still that there should be a necessity for them. We hope we shall have no necessity for their repetition here.

While not everyone agreed with vigilante justice, one thing was certain. Charles Wilkins would not escape again.

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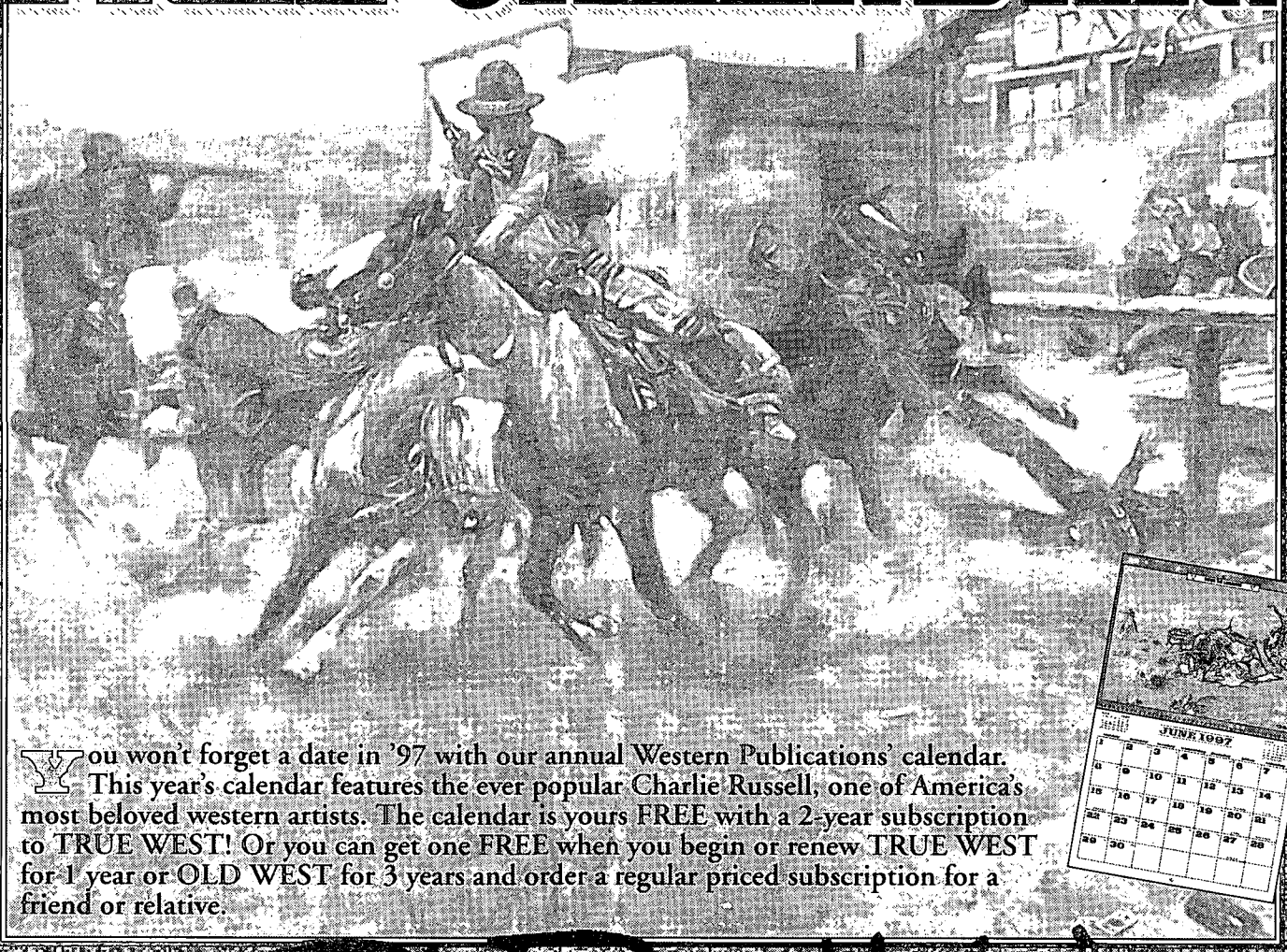

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THE PE

Historical Center for Southwest New Mexico

John S. Chisum.

At sunrise on July 20, 1878, the bodies of Alexander McSween and four other men lay lifeless in McSween's Lincoln, New Mexico, yard. The ruins of his home smouldered nearby.

As anything resembling organized conflict, the Lincoln County War was over. McSween's partner , John Tunstall, had been killed several months earlier when the rivalry for economic domination had first exploded into bloodshed. Many factors contributed to the failure of the McSween-Tunstall faction to overthrow the monopoly of the James Dolan Company. The most significant cause was a simple difference in the makeup of the opposing personalities: Jimmy Dolan was quite prepared to settle matters by violent confrontation, McSween and Tunstall were not.

Had Tunstall and his associate taken a close look toward the Pecos Valley the year before, they might have realized the dangers they were flirting with as they worked their financial schemes along the Rio Bonito. The signs were there—clear indications of the true scope of the conflict they were creating. In the spring of 1877 dozens of men from the Seven Rivers area, close associates of Dolan, were clearly displaying their capacity for trading bullets with their enemies. Their feud against rancher John S. Chisum had flared into a small-scale version of the warfare Tunstall and McSween would later encounter, a smattering of killings and near-fatal collisions which would be known to history as the Pecos War.

By 1876, John Chisum was no longer, technically, the Cattle King of New Mexico. In the fall of 1875, he had sold the bulk of his stock to the firm of Hunter, Evans & Company, a commission house headed by hard-nosed forty-two-year-old Scotch-born Robert D. Hunter and operating out of Kansas City, Missouri, and East Saint Louis, Illinois. But Chisum kept possession of the herds, agreeing to manage the stock as Hunter gradually disposed of the animals through government contracts and the firm's East Saint Louis canning facility. To the small ranchers living in Chisum's shadow in the Pecos Valley, nothing had changed. They still looked upon Chisum as a range-

• BY DAVID KING •

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PECOS WAR

hungry overlord who, given his way, would shove the small outfits back into Texas whence they had come. By thus classifying Chisum, they justified in their own minds the systematic enlargement of their herds with Chisum calves and the occasional pilfering of more significant numbers of cattle. By late 1876, "Uncle John" Chisum had decided enough was enough.

The sale to Hunter and Evans had not left Chisum entirely without stock of his own. He disposed of a further 8,000 head in 1876, to an informal partnership made up of the Brownwood, Texas, firm of Coggins & Parks, and Robert Wylie of Runnels County, Texas. Chisum had bought several thousand head from this group in late 1872 or early 1873. Now, with a number of lawsuits pending against him, the king of the Pecos was eager to protect his fortune by ridding himself of any seizable property. Four thousand head of these animals were driven to the Texas panhandle, where they were used to establish what later became the Matador Ranch on the Pease River. The remaining herd, apparently owned solely by Bob Wylie, remained on the Pecos in New Mexico. With them stayed Wylie and several of his herders, among them Jim Highsaw, a man named Yopp, and possibly Thomas B. "Buck" Powell.

Bob Wylie, at forty years of age, had been in the cattle business some twenty-four years. Beginning in his middle teens, when he received a small beef herd as payment for work as a bricklayer's apprentice, Wylie had gradually expanded his operations until he was one of the biggest cattlemen in west Texas. In early 1865, he made his first trail drive, going with four companions to Old Mexico. Later that year he hired to Jim Patterson to boss a drive to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. Patterson, who with his partner Tom Roberts held contracts to supply beef to Forts Sumner and Stanton, had already opened the trail up the Pecos that would become famous as the Goodnight-Loving Trail. Continuing in this capacity for several years, around 1872 Wylie apparently decided to stay in New Mexico. Following a drive in company with Sam Coggin, Wylie held his herd south of Fort Sumner for about four months. It is possible he was simply wintering the herd there due to an abundance of beef at the govern-

Robert McCubbin Collection

Buck Powell and family.

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ment installation. Regardless of his intentions, a heavy blizzard scattered the cattle and sent a disgusted Wylie back to Texas after quickly accepting John Chisum's offer to purchase the animals.

After three more years spent ranching in Coleman and Runnels counties, Wylie ventured to New Mexico again, with Coggin and W. Clay Parks, and the group acquired the previously mentioned 8,000 Chisum cattle. Again Wylie showed some inclination to stay in New Mexico. Much like Tunstall and McSween, he soon found himself in a situation for which he was not well suited. Although no stranger to death, Wylie was not a violent man. His temperament was such that one of his cowboys described him as a "whole-souled sort of fellow, trustful of everybody." It was to be this very trait which would largely contribute to the coming troubles. The Pecos herd owned by the trustful Wylie was preyed upon by local thieves and especially by his own employees.

Chief among the cow thieves in Wylie's employ were Buck Powell and Dick Smith, the latter holding a position described variously as foreman, one-time foreman, and straw boss. These men determined that Wylie's herd offered a convenient source from which to set themselves up as independent stockmen. They, and others like them, had grown tired of living the hard life of a cowboy and seeing the big profits go to others. Finding ready buyers among their Seven Rivers friends as well as the Dolan group at Lincoln, Smith and Powell, along with others, began helping themselves to Wylie cattle.

If Wylie did not take this stealing seriously, John Chisum did, and he was not without assistance in his search for the culprits. Robert M. Gilbert, who had settled on the lower Penasco River, was quickly making enemies in Seven Rivers by keeping Chisum posted on illegal activities there. The forty-eight- year-old Gilbert, a Mexican War veteran, had known Chisum in Texas and joined his friend in New Mexico in the early 1870s. He was a consistent source of reliable information on rustling activities and would later serve Governor Lew Wallace in the same capacity.

Gilbert and Chisum were not the only Wylie associates ready to stand up against the lawless element. Two key players in the Pecos War came with Wylie from Texas. Jim Highsaw, a twenty-two- year-old cowboy with a reputation as a gunman, had known Wylie since childhood. His father had worked for Bob and his brothers during the late 1850s in Erath County, and Jim was working for Bob in Coleman County by 1868. How the young herder acquired his reputation is unknown, but he would soon back it up with swift and deadly action.

Another Wylie cowboy was a man known to history only by his surname, Yopp. He was surely a relative of Thomas McCall Yopp, who was living at Wylie's Texas ranch about this time. The Yopps were a prominent Georgia family until the Civil War destroyed their fortune and sent them westward. Thomas apparently did not accompany the Wylie group to New Mexico, probably due to age and the effects of a Civil War wound. The most likely possibilities for the Yopp who did make the trip are Samuel and Sidney, younger brothers of Thomas.

Whatever his first name, Yopp did not rest easy with the news that other Wylie employees were stealing cattle from their boss. Around early October 1876, Yopp encountered Buck Powell in one of the cow

Western Publications

John Chisum Ranch near Roswell, New Mexico, in the 1880s

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camps. As well as partnering with Dick Smith in the stolen cattle trade, Powell had made no secret of his dislike for John Chisum. Stories differ as to what took place when Yopp confronted Powell. Probably he accused Powell of theft and tempers quickly flared. Whatever the details, lead was soon flying and a moment later Yopp lay dead on the ground. The Pecos War had begun.

The killing of Yopp received no special notice among New Mexico's legal faction. Powell provided a story presenting himself as an innocent victim of a murderous assault, who had narrowly escaped with his life. His self-defense claim was challenged neither by authorities nor the Chisum-Wylie group, who entertained no hope of assistance from legal officers slanted toward the Seven Rivers crowd. Buck Powell remained free, and the incident did nothing to decrease his acquisition of Pecos cattle. It did, however, increase Chisum's determination to put a stop to the thievery.

With the death of Yopp, the battle lines were drawn. The cowboys of Chisum and Wylie steeled themselves for a fight. Among others, the Chisum-Wylie forces included Highsaw, Charles Brady, Johnny Evers, Thomas Easton, J.M. Franklin, Nathan Hendricks, Cicero Knight, Charlie Moore, and Edward Jackson. The fact that Chisum was hurriedly importing reinforcements may be inferred from the fact that complaints would later be sworn against "other persons whose names are not known."

The opposition was made up of such Seven Rivers hotheads as Powell, Smith, Andy Boyle, the Beckwith clan, W.H. Johnson, Jake Owen, Lewis Paxton, Nathan Underwood, Milo Pierce, Charlie Woltz, Charlie Perry, and Robert and Wallace Olinger. Many of these men had been seasonal employees of John Chisum, and several were owed wages by either Chisum or Wylie. The big ranchmen saw no reason why they should pay cowboys to steal their own stock, so Chisum and Wylie withheld payment of these debts.

Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library

Robert Beckwith

At this crucial time, Chisum had matters aside from his fight with the Seven Rivers group to deal with. Hunter, Evans held the contract to supply beef to the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona. Chisum had determined to relocate a large portion of the herd to the Sulphur Springs area south of San Carlos, making delivery more convenient. At the time of Yopp's death, the first bunch of cattle was being gathered for the move west.

While this work was going on, another theft occurred which amounted to a loss of several hundred head of ChisumWylie beef. The culprits probably included, as usual, Buck Powell and Dick Smith. Most of the cattle were apparently sold at El Paso, although it is possible some were driven by Milo Pierce and Nath Underwood to Fort Stockton, Texas. Whatever the particulars, Bob Gilbert was quick to let Chisum in on the event. Gilbert pointed Chisum in the direction of Hugh Beckwith's Seven Rivers ranch.

Beckwith was a Virginian by birth, and about sixty years old. He had been in New Mexico some thirty years, and had located at Seven Rivers in 1870. He and his wife had seven children. Sons Robert and John would play prominent roles in future Lincoln County difficulties. The Beckwith ranch was the primary rendezvous of the Seven Rivers ranching community. As such, it was also a center-point for trade in stolen stock.

Chisum was too busy gathering the Arizona herd to check out Gilbert's tip in person. But he instructed his brother, Pitzer, to ride down to Beckwith's and take a look. Around late October or early November, as Uncle John led some twenty men and 4,000 cattle on the slow trip westward, Pitzer Chisum and Jim Highsaw headed south toward the Beckwith place.

Upon their arrival at Seven Rivers, the pair discovered solid evidence of the recent theft of Chisum cattle. In the Beckwith corral they found several hundred ears bearing Chisum's trademark "jinglebob." This earmark, when properly applied, was nearly impossible to alter. The "long rail" body brand could be converted into any number of figures. But the earmark left thieves only one option—to cut the ears off.

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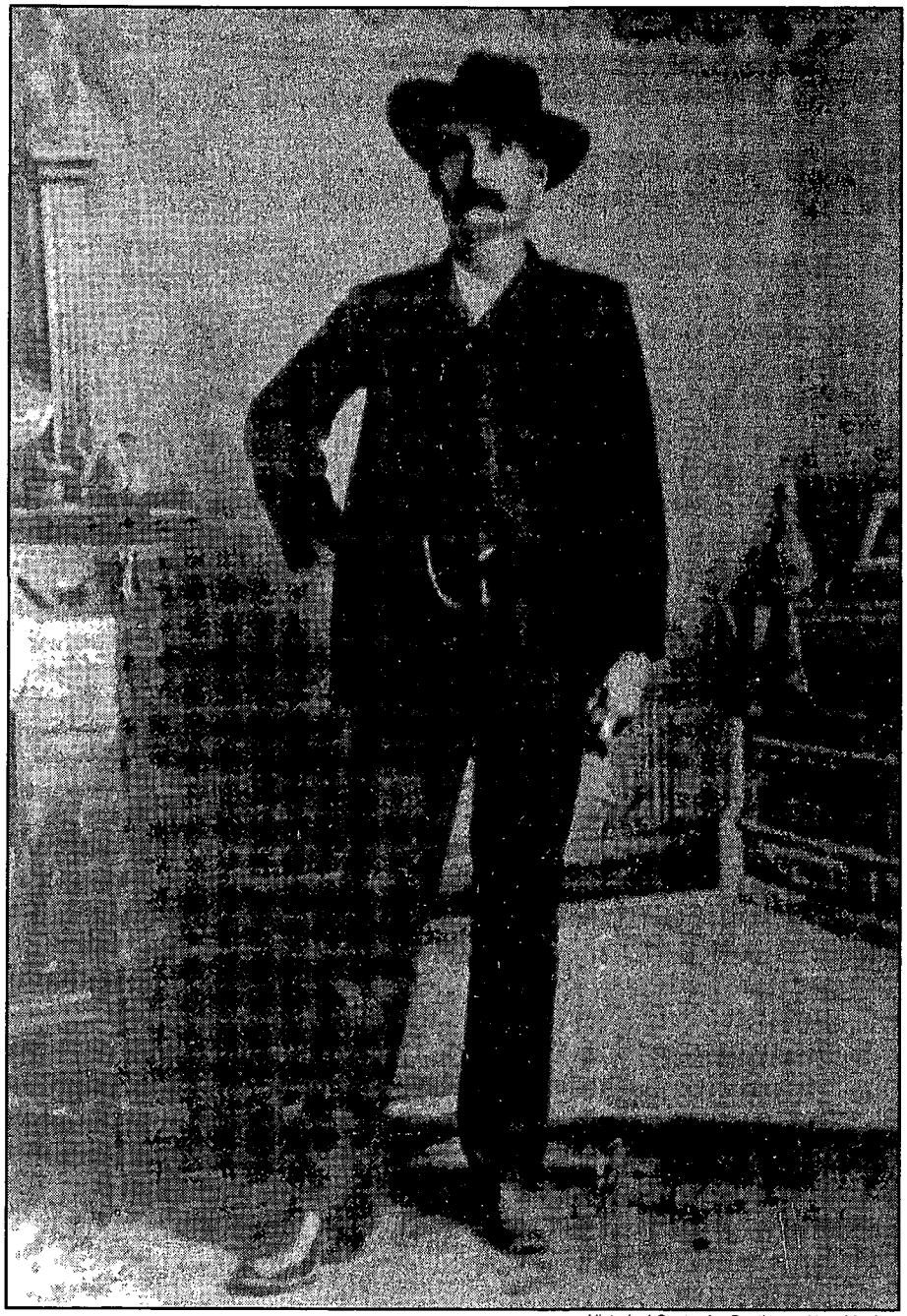

Historical Center for Southwest New Mexico

Charles Perry, 1891.

With such incontrovertible evidence, Jim Highsaw was probably eager for confrontation. But without instructions from his brother, Pitzer Chisum declined to take action.

The cattle were gone, and without some idea of their whereabouts, nothing could be gained by such a confrontation except bloodshed. Lacking further orders, Pitzer was not inclined to make such a dangerous move.

By the end of the year, the Chisum faction had received another tip. An El Paso associate sent word that some of the stolen stock had been sold in that vicinity. This information quickly reached John Chisum in Arizona. By early January of 1877, he was headed for El Paso, leaving the trail herders to watch over the Sulphur Springs cattle. Either en route or upon reaching El Paso, he met a group of cowboys led by Highsaw and they began to scour the area for animals with conspicuously missing ears.

After a lengthy search, they not only recovered a number of cattle, but obtained descriptions of the men who sold them. One description, the Chisum group felt, amounted to a positive identification of Dick Smith. However, the trip had one negative result as well. According to the recollections of Lily Casey Klasner, it was while in El Paso that John Chisum was exposed to the smallpox virus that would soon take effect on him. Driving the herd eastward, the group had reached a Chisum-Wylie camp on Delaware Creek when the rancher began to suffer symptoms of the deadly disease.

The Chisum cowboys were greatly concerned by their boss's illness, and Chisum's former slave and current horse wrangler made a desperate ride to Fort Stanton in search of medical aid. But the old stockman seems to have given his condition little worry. At precisely this time, "Uncle John" decided to turn up the heat on the opposition. Apparently, by this time, Bob Wylie was ready to do the same. So was Jim Highsaw.

On March 10, 1877, Highsaw found the man he was looking for. At a public cow camp at Loving's Bend on the Pecos, he met Dick Smith, along with Charlie Perry and Jake Owen.

Having what he considered a positive eyewitness identification, Highsaw did not hesitate to confront Smith about his rustling activities. Openly accused, Smith reacted just as Buck Powell had when accused by Yopp — he went for his gun. His luck was not as strong as Powell's, however. Highsaw, who would later be described as "quick as lightning on the draw" and "cool under any circumstances," beat him to it. Several shots were fired, and at least three bullets struck Smith. He died on the spot.

Owen and Perry made no move against him, but Highsaw knew repercussions would be quick to materialize. He headed straight for the Chisum ranch house at South Spring River, and alerted the men there to prepare for a fight.

Concluded next issue.

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Calamity's Sister

By Jean A. Mathisen

Calamity Jane. Western Publications

Sister was a hellraiser. There was no doubt about it in the girl's mind. Sister would go off on her own, hell-bent for election, although she was worried about what would happen to little sister and little brother—but still, she would go off and leave them.

Such may well have been the thoughts of eight-year-old Lena Pauline Canary at Salt Lake City in the year 1865. Big sister was twelve-year-old Martha Jane, later to become famous to history as Calamity Jane. Little brother was five-year-old Elija or Lige, who would later serve time in the Wyoming Penitentiary.

There is much controversy as to where the Canary family actually came from and how the parents died. According to an article by Lylas Skovgard in a 1941 issue of the *Basin Republican Rustler*, from information obtained from Lena's son, Tobe Borner, the Canarys had traveled by wagon train to Salt Lake City Utah in 1865. The father was a Methodist minister who had been studying the Mormon religion and had decided the Salt Lake Valley was a veritable paradise. Somewhere along the trail, Indians attacked the train and killed Mr. and Mrs. Canary. It had been their night to guard the stock belonging to the wagon train. According to the story told by Tobe, young Martha Jane traveled ten miles back to a military post they had passed to inform the soldiers of the tragedy. The troopers were able to retrieve most of the stock, and Martha Jane took charge of the wagon and her young brother and sister and moved on to Salt Lake.

After arriving in Salt Lake City, the twelve-year-old sold the ox team and wagon, bought winter clothes for the family, and found a place for Lena and Lige to live. Martha went

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to work in a boarding house and from there began her wanderings for the rest of her life. Yet in her own biography, Calamity Jane related that the family had trekked to the goldfields of Montana, not to Utah. In this tale, Mr. Canary was a sometime gambler and preacher and Mrs. Canary washed laundry in the mining camps of Montana and supposedly died of washtub fever in Blackfoot, Montana, in 1866. Mr Canary died in 1867. Calamity continues in her autobiography that she left for Salt Lake in the spring of 1866, presumably with her brother and sister.

In her version, Mr. Canary died in 1867. She relates they arrived at Fort Bridger on May 1, 1868.

Ellen Crago Mueller, for her book *Calamity Jane*, interviewed Bill Wilkinson, a great-nephew of Martha Jane. According to his account, Martha was in the area of the mining camps on South Pass in Wyoming around 1870-71. Calamity may have been working at a boarding house in South Pass City, or according to her version, was living with the Major Gallagher family in the camp of Miner's Delight, when she met up with freighter John G. Borner. Tobe Borner related that on one of John's trips back and forth to Salt Lake City from the mining camps, he was badly hurt and broke his leg. He was taken to the rooming house where Martha Jane Canary was working and she set his leg. Martha knew Borner would be laid up for some time and asked if she could make the trip to Salt Lake for him to check on her brother and sister. She supposedly made two trips in the next six weeks and brought Borner's customary load of goods to South Pass. After his leg healed, Borner resumed his trips to Salt Lake and made the acquaintance of Lena and Lige Canary.

Wyoming Division of Cultural Resources

John Borner wearing his Grand Army of the Republic hat in later years.

John Borner was born in Saxony, Germany, in 1835 and immigrated to the United States in 1859, taking up farming in Wisconsin. When the Civil War exploded upon the scene, Borner enlisted in the Twelfth Wisconsin Infantry on September 25, 1861. He became ill seven months later and entered the hospital with chronic hepatitis and severe diarrhea.

He received a disability discharge on December 20, 1862, at Jackson Creek, Mississippi.

His health improved after a time and he re-enlisted in the Fiftieth Wisconsin and served until the end of the war. Borner later came west and was present at the Wyoming gold rush at South Pass in 1869. Besides running his freight team, Borner became fast friends with two young gold miners, Ernest and John Martin Hornecker, at Miner's Delight. The Hornecker brothers, both natives of Germany, had come to Wyoming from Missouri in February 1869. In 1872, Borner and Ernest Hornecker tried their hands at raising potatoes near the site of old Camp Brown (the future site of Lander, Wyoming) on the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie River, some thirty miles from Miner's Delight. Later in the year, they moved to an area known as Chief Washakie's horse pasture, near the mouth of Sinks Canyon at the base of the Wind River Mountains. Here both men, along with Jake Frey, a friend, squatted on what was then Indian land and took up claims. Chief Washakie knew the men and had encouraged them to settle in the valley to help provide protection for his Eastern Shoshone band from raiding Sioux and Arapahoes. On New Year's Day, 1873, the men moved into a small cabin on Hornecker's claim and began farming and ranching in earnest. Later that year, Borner relocated onto his

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adjoining claim in a rich meadowland near the Popo Agie River.

Borner brought Lena Canary to the area within a short time. The James I. Patten family, living at Camp Brown on the Little Wind River, was in need of some live-in help. Jim Patten asked Borner if he knew of some young lady who could assist his wife, and Borner brought Lena back to the valley on his next trip. Lena (or Jennie, as he called her) worked for the Pattens for a time, but romance had blossomed between the by-now eighteen-year-old girl and Borner, who was twenty-some years her senior. John Borner and Lena Pauline Canary were married in 1875, either at Lander or by James Kime at Mineral's Delight (here again, versions vary as to the month and location of the marriage).

The Borners became the parents of seven children over the next nine years: May Rebecca, Tobias (Tobe), Frank Edward, Theresa Theodosha, Hannah, Bertha Pauline and William Frederick.

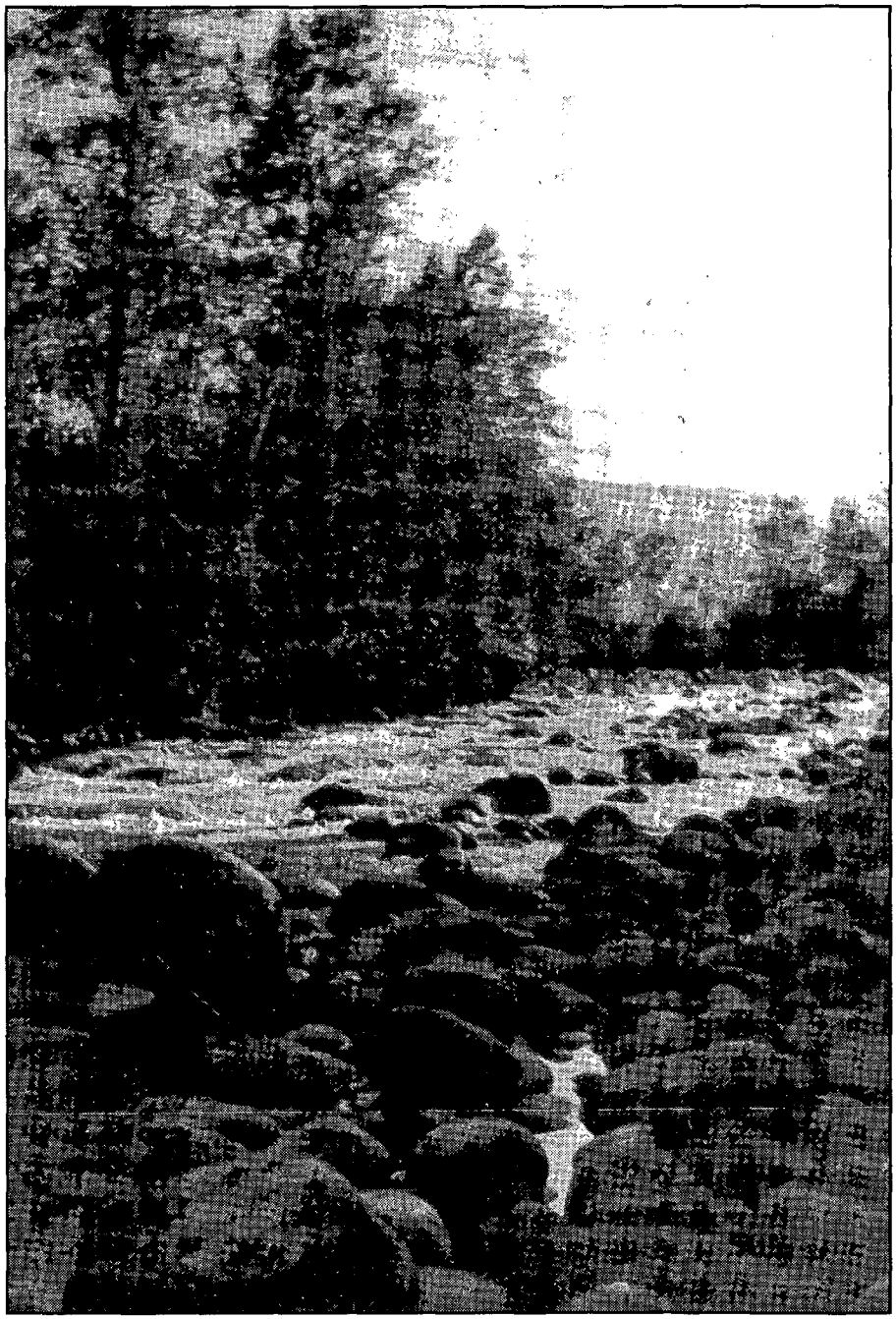
In the meantime, the valley they had settled in was beginning to fill with new settlers. The immediate ranching community around the Borner place became known as Borner's Garden a name that remains to this day. The Hornecker boys, Ernest and Mart, had settled down as adjoining neighbors, married and started raising families of their own. A small school was built as children reached school age and was known as the Borner's Garden school over the next fifty to sixty years. A community hall was built just around the hill from the Borner place.

Accounts differ as to whether Borner and Lena's infamous sister got along, although a younger brother of Ernest and Mart's, Albert Hornecker, remembered that Calamity would travel by in a buggy on her way to visit her sister Lena when she knew Borner would be gone. Tobe Borner related that his father had no use for Calamity and felt she was a poor influence on his growing family. However, Tobe also related that Martha Jane was present at his birth in May of 1877. Old-timers in Lander, the community that grew up on the site of old Camp Brown, stated that Calamity Jane and her sister Lena ran a laundry together in a small log building that sat on Main Street, between Second and Third, in early-day Lander.

The friendship with the Horneckers also died a rough death. In 1888 they and the Borners became embroiled in a feud over a ditch that was to be built across Mart Hornecker's land.

The feud became so bitter that Borner took Hornecker to court to obtain an injunction against further interference. The *Fremont Clipper* of June 14, 1888, related, "Mr. Borner had some time since pronounced an injunction to prevent any interference on the part of Hornecker, but as injunctions do not injunct to any great extent now-a-days, he has commenced action against Hornecker for malicious destruction of property."

Tragedy visited the Borner family in October of 1888. Thirty-one-year-



Mary Hornecker Overcash Collection

Popo Agie River at Borner's Garden.

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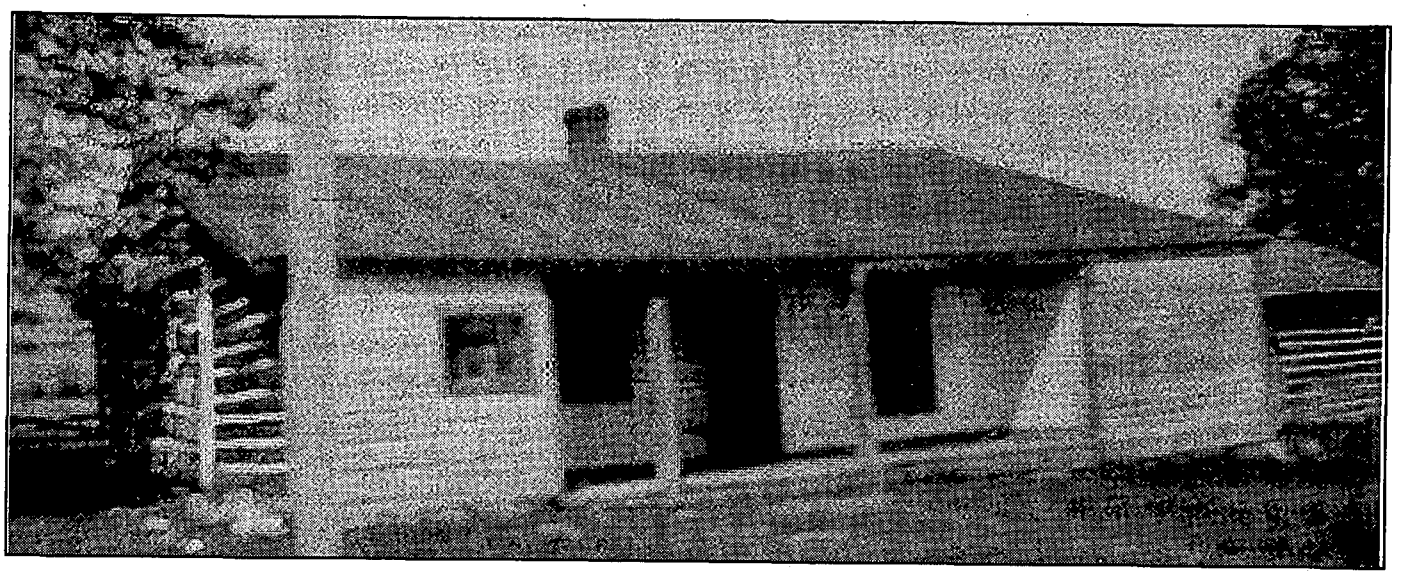

Mary Hornecker Overcash Collection

Ernest Hornecker's cabin at Borner's Garden near Lander.

old Lena Canary Borner, after suffering ill health for some time (evidently from injuries sustained from being kicked by a cow), passed away. Her obituary in the October 17, 1888, issue of the *Fremont Clipper* stated, "She was one of the most industrious women in the valley and one whom all her acquaintances held in the highest respect. Her pride was in her children and her home...."

In the mid-1880s, Lander's cemetery had to be shut down due to leakage from a ditch and springs in the hill nearby. The Lander Lodge No. 2, A.F. and A.M. started its own cemetery at Milford with land donated by Charles Harrison. Lena was buried here, though her grave location is unknown and remains unmarked to this day. Pallbearers at her funeral were James I. Patten (ironically, an uncle by marriage to Ernest Hornecker), E.F. Cheney, Charles E. Fogg, F.G. Burnett, Charley Allen, and Samuel Sparhawk, all very prominent citizens of Lander.

Heartbroken and tired of fighting with his neighbors, John Borner decided to move. He took his hired man, J.A. Benjamin, and went to northern Wyoming to find a new location. He built a cabin at what would someday be the site of Greybull, Wyoming, and later added corrals and barns. A special June 6, 1974, edition of the *Greybull Standard* stated that Borner was "a prosperous and very intelligent rancher from the Lander country. He picked Greybull as the site of his new home because of his belief that it was an ideal location. Two rivers flowed into the Big Horn within the space of a mile, the Greybull River and Shell Creek. Between the mouths of these two streams, he felt should be an ideal site for a town."

In 1888 the Wyoming Territorial Legislature authorized a Poor Farm for the soon-to-be state. The trustees bought Borner's ranch, and in the spring of 1889, Borner loaded up his wagons along with his children and moved to his new land claim. He had 100 head of cattle, a herd of horses, and a herd of mules he had acquired from the government. A son-in-law, Irvin Wilkinson, later stated that Borner brought along lumber, paint and window sashes to use in his new home and a lot of "Prussian blue paint," which he proceeded to paint on everything that did not move. Wilkinson's wife remembered the trip well. They had four wagons. Her dad put all the kids in one wagon and pulled it with four mules. The mules did not need any driving, they just followed. The kids sat down in the front with a box of crackers and a jug of syrup and ate on the syrup-smeared crackers all the way to the Big Horn Basin. Borner loved his children. Wilkinson went on to tell, "He used to come home nights after work and he'd throw some old buffalo robes down on the floor and play with the kids."

Wilkinson also told about Borner building a large storm cellar. When he had to go on long trips for supplies to Billings, he would caution the seven youngsters to stay in the cellar because of Indians that traveled through the area.

They would go into the cellar, but after he had left, they soon came out.

Borner became an honored member of the community in his later years, known affectionately as "Uncle John" to those who knew him. He was an active member of the Basin Lodge of A.F. and A.M., along with his old friend, James I. Patten, who had settled at Basin City and had become its first post master. Diseases he had acquired in the Civil War returned to plague him. He applied for a soldier's pension in 1898 and fought for some time to obtain it. He was disabled at times so severely he was unable to work. Still he lived on to a ripe old age and died on December 18, 1919. He had been receiving a thirty-five dollar per month pension.

Martha Jane, the hellraising older sister of Lena, went on her sometimes merry way and died in

Continued on page 28

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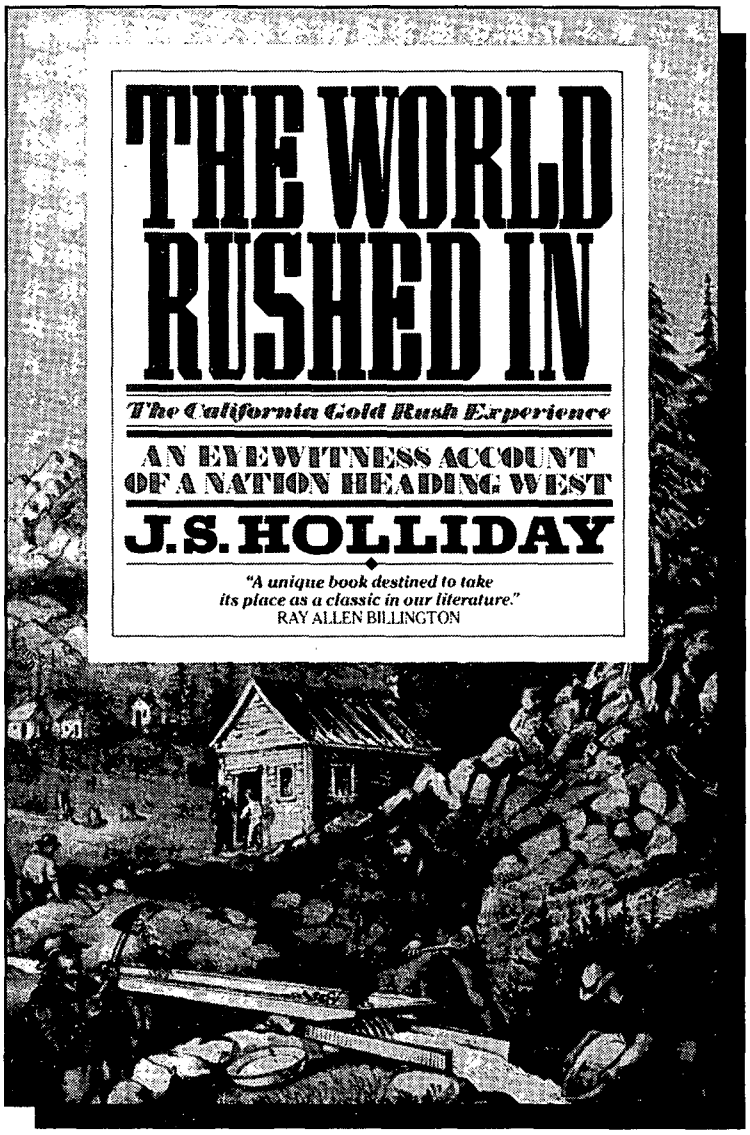

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J. S. Holliday is featured in the PBS documentary "The West"

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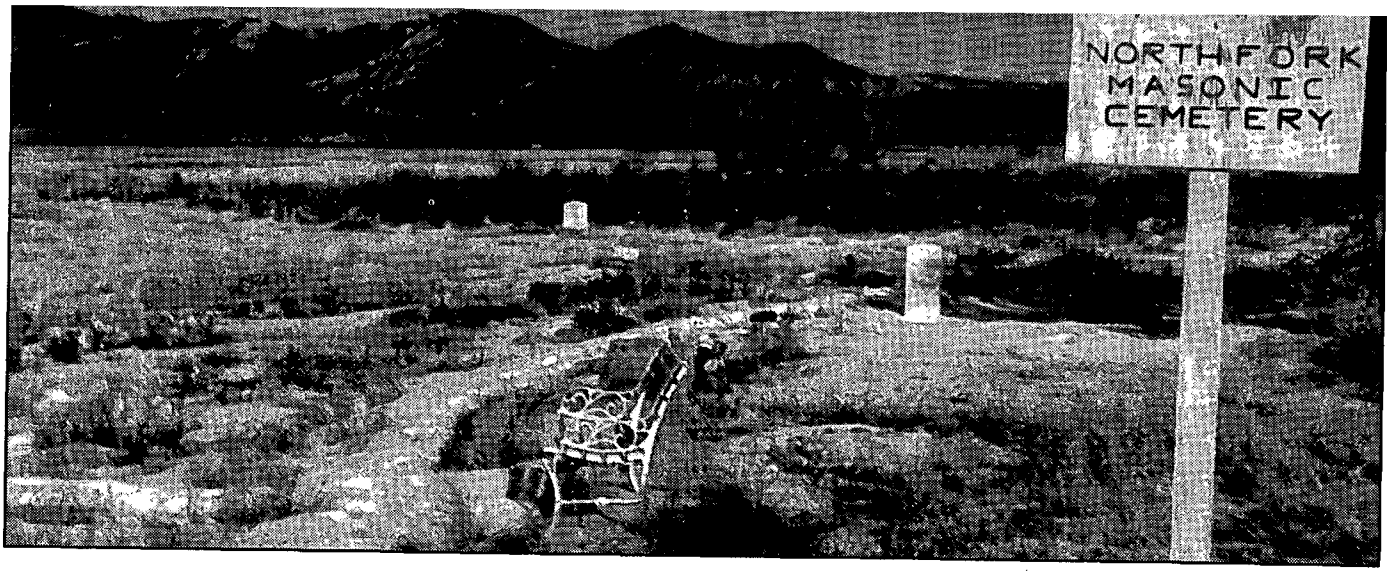

Author's Collection

North Fork Masonic Cemetery near Milford, Wyoming. Lena Canary Borner is buried in an unmarked grave here.

1903, at about age fifty-one. She had lied so often about her origins and her life that folks do not quite know just what to believe.

Lige, the youngest Canary sibling, entered the Wyoming State Penitentiary at Laramie, on May 3, 1896. His crime was obstructing railroad tracks He had hobbled horses on the railroad tracks on January 7, 1896, for the purpose of collecting damages from Union Pacific. He was listed as age twenty-eight, a resident of Uinta County (in southwest Wyoming). A ranchman with a wife in Ogden, Utah. He was released for good conduct on August 12, 1900, after serving four years and three months. Lige turned respectable after his release and returned to Uinta County and worked on the Dave Dean ranch.

Today, Martha Jane Canary, "Calamity Jane," rests in a grave next to Wild Bill Hickok at Mount Moriah Cemetery at Deadwood, South Dakota, . Lena Canary Borner lies in an unmarked grave in the quiet sagebrush-covered cemetery of a small ghost town.

Author's collection

A second view of the North Fork Masonic Cemetery. John Borner was an active Mason in the South Pass and Lander lodges and later the Basin, Wyoming, lodge.

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A TRIP HOME

On June 1, 1996, Lena Brazelton and Shirley Dillon both of Powell, Wyoming, made a trip "home." They came to the Lander Valley to see the burial place of their grandmother (and great-grandmother) Lena Canary Borner, and the site of the Borner Ranch.

Lena Brazelton, the namesake of her grandmother, Lena Borner, is the last living grandchild of John and Lena Borner. Her cousin, Shirley Dillon, is a great-grandchild.

The visitors were shown the Masonic Cemetery near the old town of Milford, where their grandmother is buried in an unmarked grave. They then traveled to the valley near Sinks Canyon that is still known in the area as Borner's Garden. John Borner's ranch is now the Jackson Ranch and only a few parts of the foundation where Borner's cabin stood still remain. However, the barn at the nearby Wallis ranch is believed to have been Borner's barn, relocated the location after he moved to the Greybull country. The cousins also visited the Pioneer Museum at Lander, where John Borner's name is engraved on a stone near the entrance. The stone lists pioneers who came to the region prior to 1870.

Lena Brazelton and Shirley Dillon

Author's Collection

Both Lena and Shirley were eager to know more about Lena Borner's life. Hannah, Lena Brazelton's mother, was only five years old when Lena Borner died. A few reminiscencess have been passed down in the family. Lena Borner was blind in one eye. Her fatal injury resulted from the fact that John had asked her not to fool with a cow and calf in the corral while he was gone. Lena went out to the corral anyway, got tangled up in a rope, and was injured. She lingered for some time and finally died at just past or around the age of thirty. John Borner, born in Saxony, Germany, had been raised to be a minister. Not liking that vocation, he ran away to the United States and later fought as a solider in the Civil War. The Borner children did recall that their father knew chapter and verse of the Bible—and did not hold with some of his infamous sister-in-law's cussing in front of them, especially when young Hannah followed her example. Calamity Jane proceeded to get drunk in Lander, stripped off her clothes and paraded up and down Main street singing at the top of her lungs. The local law arrested her (whether for her jaybird nakedness or her singing is not known) and hauled her up to Borner's ranch. He then kicked her out.

There is another story, in family lore and also in the history of Lander, that John Borner started a laundry in a log cabin between Second and Third streets on Main, for Calamity and Lena to run. Lena may have operated the laundry, but her far-ranging sibling did not linger long.

Lena and Shirley were not aware that Lige Canary, brother of Calamity Jane and Lena, had served time in the Territorial prison at Laramie; although, it was their understanding that Lige did ride with Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch for a period of time. Lige did not serve his term until after Cassidy was pardoned and was incarcerated there until around 1900. The cousins believed that in his final years, Lige lived as a hermit, though known as a kindly old gent, and is buried near Irwin, Idaho.

The cousins stated that the Canary family had emigrated from Princeton, Missouri, on a wagon train and that the parents were killed in an Indian massacre of some sort, leaving Martha Jane, Lena, and Lige orphans. The children were taken in by Mormon families in Salt Lake City. In family genealogy , Lena is listed as having been born in Ohio in 1855 or 1857. The family contends she died in 1886, rather than 1888. Lena Brazelton stated that her mother Hannah, who was born

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Author's Collection

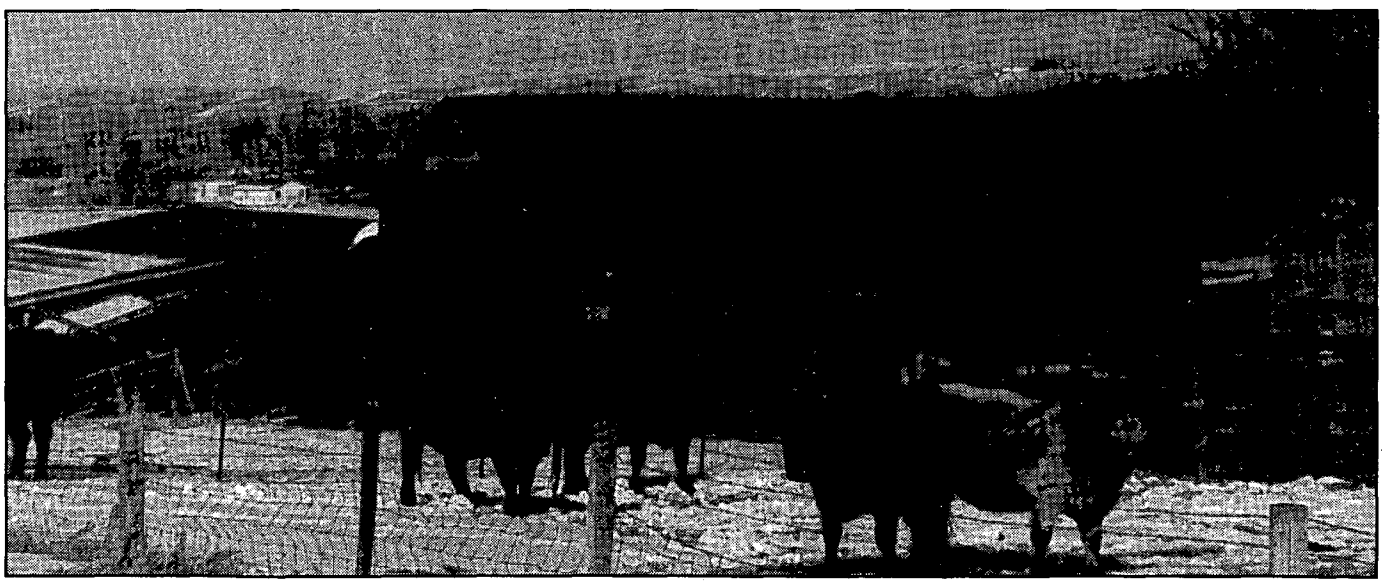
John and Lena Borner's ranch (now the Jackson Ranch) at Borner's Garden, about 4 miles southwest of Lander, Wyoming.

in 1881, was five years old when Lena Borner died. The United States Census of 1880 for the County of Sweetwater, Big Popo Agie Valley (now Fremont County), listed John Borner, age forty-one; Lena twenty-one (?); children Rebecca four; Tobias eight; Francis two; and Thresia (Theresia) five months. Three more children were born before Lena died.

At his death at the age of eighty-four in 1919, John Borner was a fairly well-off individual with assets totaling $18,000. His survivors included: Hannah Alderdice (Lena Brazelton's mother), Greybull; Mrs. May (Rebecca May) Hatton, Calgary, Alberta, Canada; Mrs. Theresia Van Alstine, Okotoks, Alberta, Canada; William Borner, Twin Falls, Idaho; Tobias Borner, Shell, Wyoming; Frank E. Borner, Greybull; Mrs. Bertha Wilkinson (Shirley's grandmother), Grebull.

The Borner house at Greybull was torn down several years ago. Only the chimney remains in a city dark to note the passage of the Borner family in the valley. After his wife's death, John Borner never remarried. He settled down and raised his seven children in a loving and affectionate manner and was one of the best liked men in the Greybull country.

Lena Brazelton and Shirley Dillon enjoyed their trip back "home" to the Lander Valley to see where their relatives had started out.



Author's Collection

Borner's barn, still standing near Lander, Wyoming. The barn was moved to the Carr Ranch (now the Walt Ellis Ranch) after Borner sold out in 1888.

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TRUE WEST LEGENDS

JOHN RINGO

BY DAVID JOHNSON

May 3, 1850—John Peters Ringo is born the oldest child of Martin and Mary Peters Ringo in Washington. Wayne County, Indiana. He is named for his maternal grandfather, John Peters. Martin Ringo, a veteran of the Mexican War, had married Mary in Liberty, Missouri, on September 5, 1848.

Summer 1856—Concerned about increasing vigilante activity in Wayne County and James H. Lane's radical Free Kansas attitude, Martin Ringo, a moderate on the slavery issue, resolves to leave Indiana. The family arrives in Liberty, Missouri, in September.

1858—Martin Ringo moves his family to Gallatin, Daviess County, Missouri, where he opens a store in partnership with Adam Clendenen, a wealthy pioneer of the area.

1862—Nightriders begin terrorizing Daviess County. These nightriders, combined with the firm anti-mob sentiments of his parents, will have a significant impact on John Ringo's later life.

August 5, 1862—Union and Confederate forces skirmish near Cravensville. The Union forces emerge victorious and capture two paroled Confederates, Thomas Hicklin and Daniel Hale. The men are executed as nightriders on the Ringo farm. It is probable that John Ringo witnesses the executions.

1864—Martin Ringo is suffering from tuberculosis which he acquired during the Mexican War. For health reasons, the family resolves to leave for California. The family starts west from Liberty with a wagon train on May 18, 1864. During the journey John drives one of the family's two wagons.

July 30, 1864—Following an Indian attack, in Wyoming, Martin Ringo is accidentally killedwhen the trigger of his rifle is caught in his boot strap and discharges. John Ringo shoulders much of the responsibility for the family from this time onward. John is considered a crack shot and provides the family with game.

October 1864—Mary Ringo and the children take a stage to California. John alone, drives one wagon. In California the family lives for about one year on the ranch of Mary's brother-inlaw, Colonel Coleman Younger, at San Jose.

July 25, 1870—John Ringo is noted in the San Jose, California, census. In the fall of that year he leaves home with a reaping crew. In early 1871 John travels to visit family in Missouri.

1872 – Word reaches John in Missouri that his brother has contracted tuberculosis. Concerned over the finances of his family, Ringo heads to Texas to take up the cattle trade.

1873—1874—John Ringo makes the acquaintance of a number of men in Llano and Burnet counties. Among them are the Olney family. During this time tensions mount in Mason County between German immigrants and neighboring ranchers.

September 7, 1875—Paid $50 by John Clark and Daniel Hoerster, the county brand inspector, Jim Cheyney rides to Loyal Valley and tells Moses Baird and George Gladden that they are wanted in Mason. At Hedwig's Hill they ride into a bloody ambush. Baird is killed.

September 25, 1875—Angered at the murder of his friend, Baird, John Ringo, and some other men ride into Mason. Ringo and a man identified as Williams ride to Cheyney's home. While Cheyney washes his face, the men kill him.

December 27, 1875—Ringo and another man are arrested in Burnet County by Sheriff John Clymer and charged with threatening his life, Within days the county is in an uproar over Ringo's arrest, and a strong guard has to be posted to prevent the men from being broken out.

May 4, 1876—A group of men including Joe Olney, storm the jail in Lampasas,Texas, freeing Ringo and his partner. The pair ride across country to Mason County.

October 1876—Ringo and George Gladden are captured by a combined force of Texas Rangers and local lawmen in Llano County. The men are taken to Austin for safekeeping. By this time Ringo has acquired a reputation as one of the most desperate men in Texas.

May 15, 1878—The Mason County charges against Ringo are dismissed in court. Ringo resettles in Loyal Valley. He runs for constable and is elected in November.

December 9, 1879—Ringo shoots Louis Hancock in Safford, Arizona Territory. Texan emigrants to Arizona and New Mexico begin spreading tales about the man. Ringo is now suffering from post trauma stress syndrome and has begun to drink heavily.

July 12, 1880—Ringo, Olney, Ike Clanton, and George Turner hurrah the town of Maxey, Arizona. The men leave peacefully when confronted by Jerome B. Collins. Ringo has now settled in Cochise County, Arizona.

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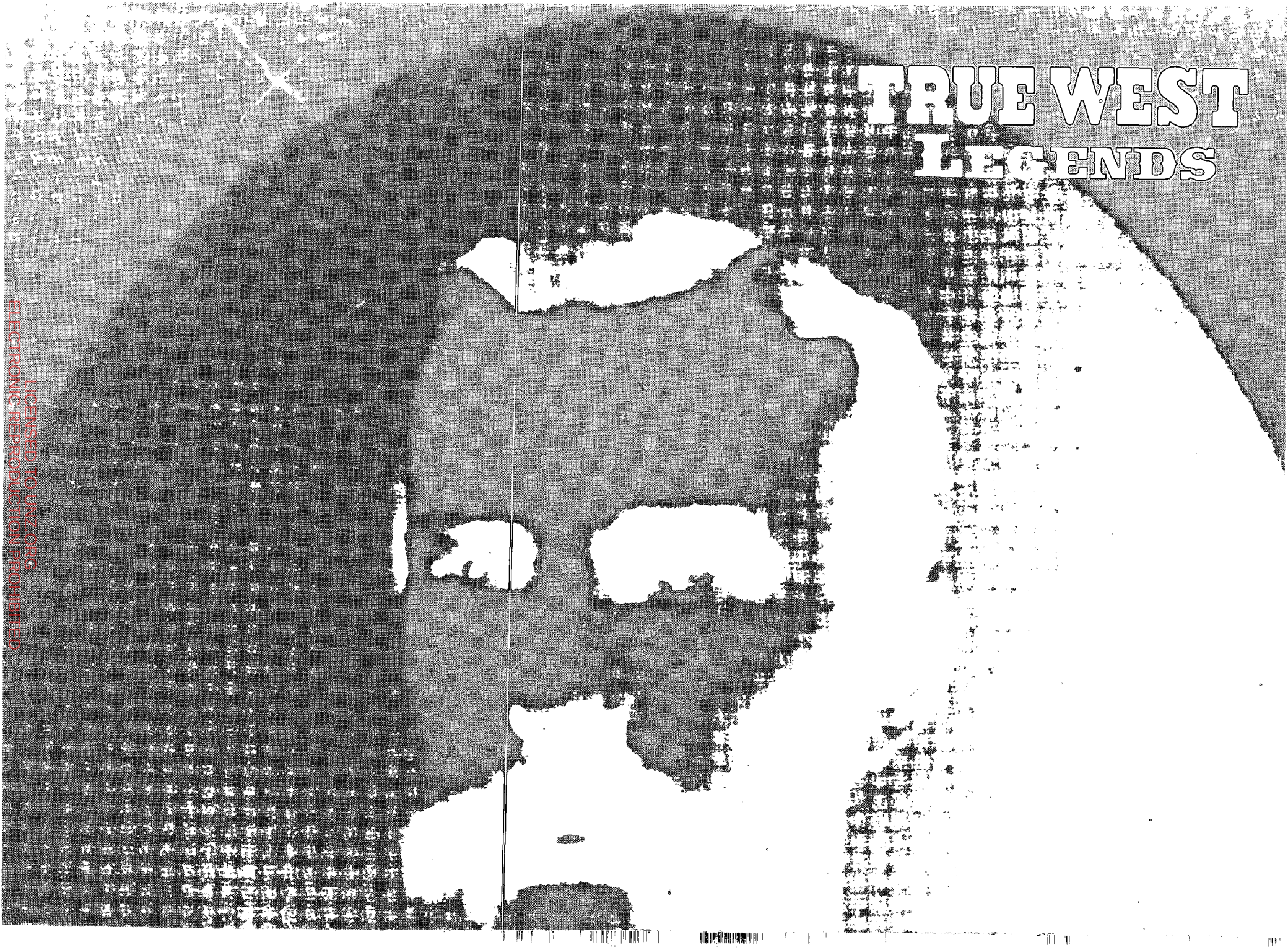
TRUE WEST LEGENDS



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What to Read

John Ringo by David Johnson.
Barbed Wire Press, PO Box 2107 Stillwater, OK 74074

John Ringo- The Gunfighter Who Never Was, by Jack Burrows.
University of Arizona Press, 1230 N Park Ave. STE 102 Tucson, AZ, 85719-4140

John Ringo: Mythical Gunfighter by Ben Traywick.
Red Maries's, Box 891 Tombstone, AZ 85638

March 8, 1881 – Dick Lloyd is killed at Camp Thomas after shooting a man and riding a stolen horse into O'Neil's saloon. Ringo, among others, is charged with slaying Lloyd, but contemporary newspaper accounts indicate that he was killed by bartender Jack O'Neil.

Summer 1881– Bitter controversy and bloodshed erupt along the Arizona-Mexican border as Mexican and American bandits raid back and forth. The situation threatens an international incident, and the federal government moves to investigate. In Cochise County trouble occurs when John H. "Doc" Holliday is arrested for stage robbery. His supporters, Wyatt Earp and Earp's brothers, force his common law wife, Kate Fisher, to flee Tombstone. The investigation against Holliday continues. Ringo is visiting his family in California during this time period.

August 1881– Ringo becomes angry when a fellow poker player in Charleston refuses to extend him credit because his word is not good enough. Ringo and Dave Estes hold up the game. The money is later returned, but both men are charged for the crime.

October 26, 1881– The most controversial gunfight in western history erupts in Tombstone. Billy Clanton and Tom and Frank McLaury are shot to death. Morgan and Virgil Earp are both wounded. Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp are jailed. The Clantons and others now look to John Ringo to take a lead role in avenging their friends and kinsmen.

December 28, 1881 – Virgil Earp is shotgunned and crippled for life by unknown assailants. Wyatt Earp later charges that Ringo was one of the men responsible.

February 15, 1882 – Ringo challenges Wyatt Early and Doc Holliday and some of their gang on the streets of Tombstone. He is promptly arrested before any shooting can take place.

March 18, 1882 – Morgan Earp is killed while playing pool in Campbell & Hatch's billiard hall. Ringo denies any involvement. Seeing that they can no longer remain safely in Arizona, the Earps begin their flight. Several men are killed by the gang as they leave Arizona. Ringo is drafted as a posseman to go in pursuit.

April 1882 – John Ringo returns to California to visit his sisters. They attempt to convince him to move there.

June 1882 – Ringo, once again in Arizona, goes on another drinking spree. By this time post trauma stress syndrome has made him violent and suicidal. Avoided by others during these bouts of drinking, Ringo rides alone.

July 13, 1882 – John Ringo commits suicide in the mountains above Tombstone. Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday claimed to have pulled the trigger on Ringo, although evidence provided by contemporary accounts clearly indicate that his death was indeed a suicide.

Where to Go

Tombstone Arizona — The entire town of Tombstone is a testament to the conflict between the Cowboy faction and Earp family. Sites include the infamous OK Corral, The restored Birdcage Theater, and boot hill. John Ringo is buried not far from Tombstone, beside West Turkey Creek, the spot his body was found in 1882. To locate the grave, which is on private land, take Arizona Highway 181 to the Sander's Ranch in Southeastern Arizona. The grave is not far from the main ranch house beside Turkey creek.

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Outlaws & Lawmen

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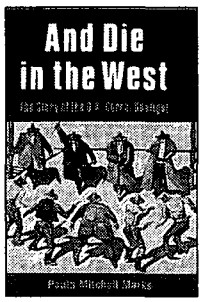

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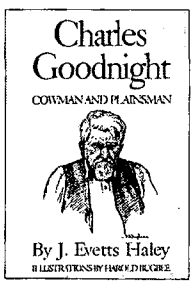

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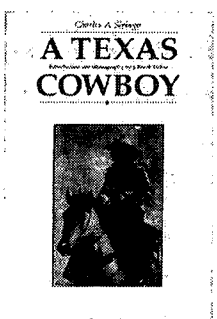

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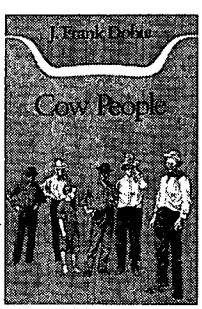

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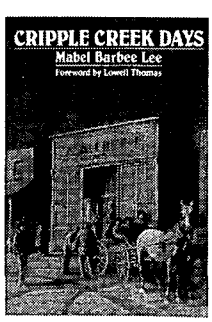

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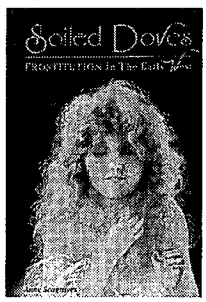

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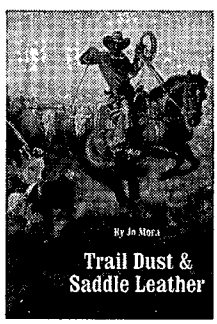

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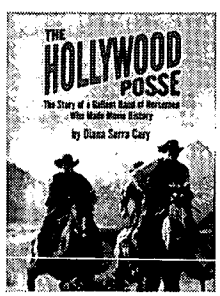

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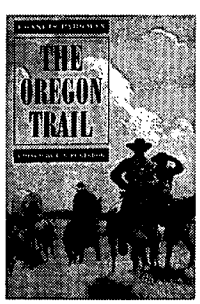

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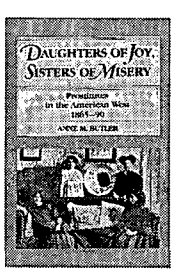

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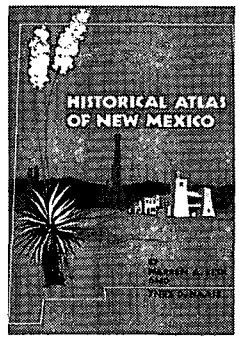

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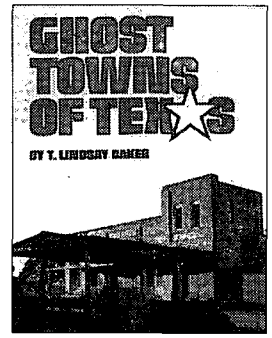

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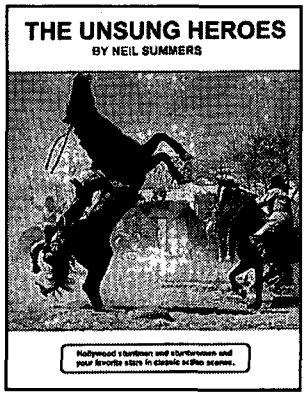

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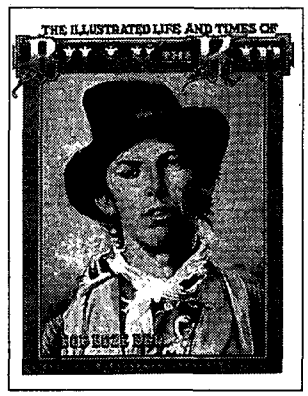

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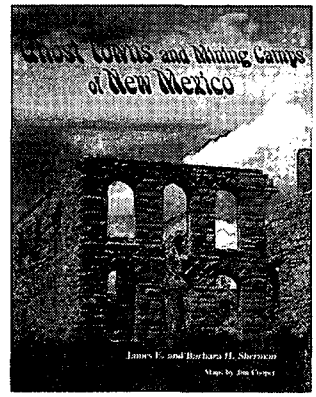

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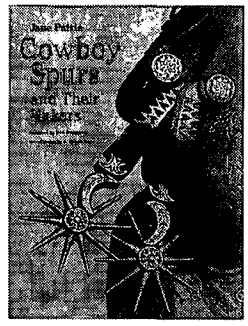

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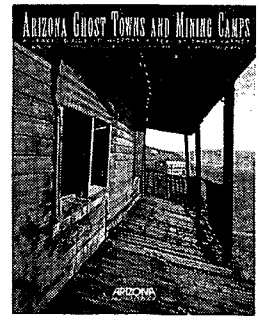

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The Mysterious Hank Dodge Murder Case

Young James McGuire was a happy man on that September day in 1874 when he rode out of Wallace, Kansas. He was driving a team of uniquely marked horses that were pulling an almost new wagon, and he had money in his pocket. He had just sold $1600 worth of buffalo hides to a firm owned by Peter Robidoux, Thomas Madigan, and A. L. Dodge. After refitting, he was headed toward southwestern Nebraska for another buffalo hunt.

Two fellows were trailing him. Supposedly they also were hunting hides, although they had never been known to do much hunting before. A few weeks later William Henry (Hank) Dodge and Walter Hardin drove boldly back through the Wallace, Kansas, area with the same distinctively marked team and wagon that McGuire had driven out of town earlier. They said they had encountered McGuire on the trail and bragged about their acquisition of McGuire's rig and his gun. A man named Cooley recalled camping with the two men on the Smoky Hill near Wallace in late September and commented that they had said at that time that they were "after McGuire."

A. L. Dodge, no relation to Hank, was deputy sheriff of Ellis County, Kansas. He decided their possession of McGuire's rig should be looked into, so he pursued them some hundred miles southwest of Wallace, arrested them for grand larceny of goods from James McGuire, and lodged them in the county jail in Hays City.

At the same time Sheriff Dodge was pursuing the two in Kansas, James McGuire's weighted body was pulled from the backwaters of Frenchman Creek, a fork of the Republican River in unorganized Chase County, Nebraska, some forty miles from Julesburg, Colorado. Asbury Buckmaster, the man who found him on October 4, 1874, and gave him a decent burial nearby, wrote a letter to the *Omaha Bee* which was printed on October 21:

> Enclosed you will find a letter which was found in the pocket of James McGuire, who was murdered and buried in the waters of Frenchman Creek 40 miles from Julesburg...Will you be so kind as to publish the enclosed letter so that friends may know where he is. We buried him as best we could. For further particulars they can address me at Cedarville, Smith County, Kansas.
>
> Asbury Buckmaster

The *Bee* not only printed the letter but asked other newspapers to print it also. Buckmaster had gone northwest to Julesburg via the Union Pacific Railroad to contact authorities. While there he heard about a team of distinctively marked horses belonging to McGuire that had been in the possession of two hide hunters identified as Dodge and Hardin, who were headed toward Kansas when last seen.

Meanwhile Peter McGuire, James McGuire's brother, had read Buckmaster's letter in the *Omaha Bee* and had taken the train to Julesburg to learn more details of the murder. While there he heard about Dodge and Hardin having his brother's team and gun in their possession. He also learned they were under arrest in Hays City. He immediately wired the governor of Nebraska, Robert W. Furnas, that the men were in jail in Kansas, but were being held only for stealing, not for murder. Since he knew his brother was murdered in Nebraska, he wanted to know what was required to bring them back to Nebraska to stand trial for his brother's murder.

Governor Furnas replied, "Have charges of murder preferred. Make affidavit they are fugitives from justice. With proper papers will issue requisition. Consult a good lawyer to draw papers."

On November 3, the governor received a communication from C.W. Smith, acting sheriff of Cheyenne County, Nebraska. Smith had received a letter from the sheriff at Hays City stating that he was holding Dodge and Hardin and they would be released on a writ of

By Shirley Gilfert

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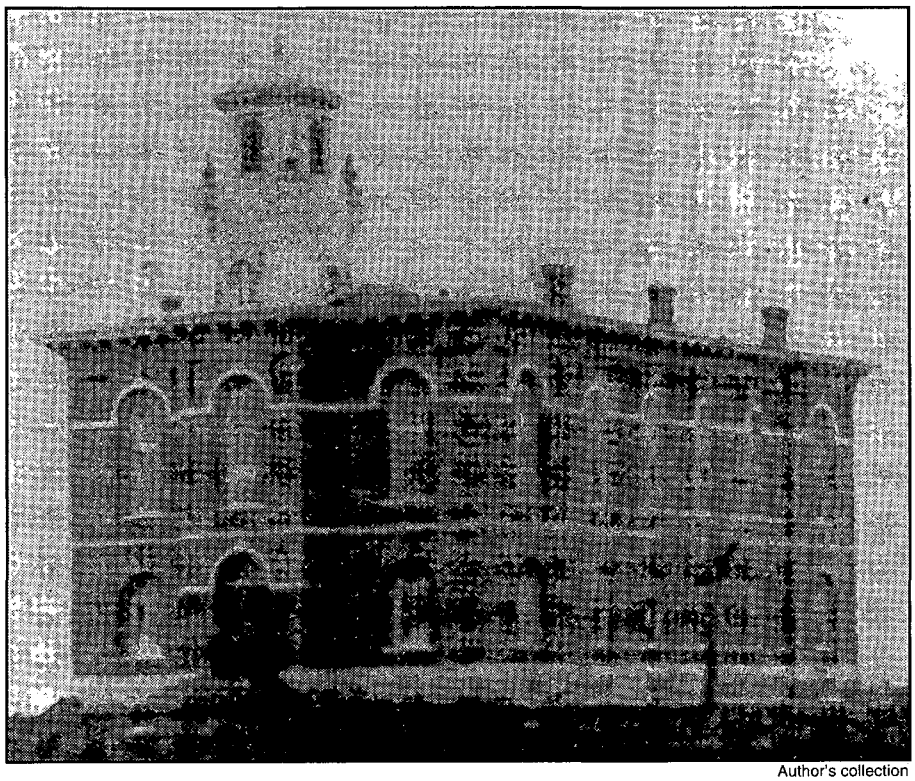

Author's collection

The Otoe County, Nebraska, Courthouse circa 1867. The jail where Dodge was held was in the center of the basement.

habeas corpus. Would Smith be coming after them? Evidently the Kansas lawman had learned about the murder and thought it had been committed in Cheyenne County.

The two prisoners were not just sitting idly in a jail cell awaiting extradition, however. Dodge, a personable twenty-year-old schemer, and Hardin, older by some ten years but always willing to go along with his young cohort's plots, enlisted the help of a George McClanahan. They convinced him to overpower the sheriff and set them free. Their freedom must have been short-lived, since they were recaptured and back in custody by the time Peter McGuire arrived to undertake their extradition to Nebraska.

Peter McGuire had been tenacious in his pursuit of his brother's killers. He had made two trips to western Nebraska to interview persons familiar with the incidents of the murder and to discuss strategy with the officials of Frontier County, which correctly held jurisdiction if the murderers were tried in Nebraska. While in Frontier County, he received a "sheriff's certificate" making him a deputy.

McGuire returned to Lincoln, then continued on to Topeka, where he met with the governor of Kansas and was issued extradition papers for release of the prisoners at Hays City.

Once he arrived at Hays City and the prisoners were released to him, McGuire faced a dilemma. How would he transport them back to Frontier County for a preliminary hearing? He could backtrack on the railroad through eastern Kansas and Nebraska, then go west to North Platte. From there he would have to go to the county seat of Frontier County by wagon. Or he could go all the way by wagon, saving about 500 miles and costing much less. The wagon trip would take longer and he might have to face winter storms. In the end he decided to make the entire trip by wagon with the assistance of a teamster to guard his prisoners, who were kept in irons.

When they arrived at the seat of Frontier County the courts were not yet functioning. The prisoners were bound over to the jurisdiction of the district court in Otoe County, which by coincidence was the home county of the murdered man, his brother Peter, and a number of other relatives, all members of the small town of Palmyra, about thirty miles west of Nebraska City, the county seat.

Finally, Peter McGuire arrived safely back in Nebraska City with his prisoners in tow. Dodge and Hardin were jailed in the Otoe County Courthouse and a grand jury was quickly convened. It determined there was enough evidence to bind the two men over for trial.

District Attorney Caleb J. Dilworth and his deputy began preparing the state's case, hoping for an early trial. Court-appointed defense counsel John C. Watson succeeded in getting a postponement until the September term of district court, however, and it was a long enough time for public opinion to change. The *Nebraska City News* commented that the "staying off is as good as an acquittal."

By early June, young Dodge had gained a large following of sympathetic visitors. He was described by a Lincoln reporter as "a young man of medium size, rather stoutly built, with broad face and fleshy neck, a clear eye, intelligent expression, dark hair and a very slight mustache." He told reporters he had come west about eight years earlier to follow the life of a hunter. Since he was only twenty at the time of his arrest, this would have put him barely into his teens. He said he had no formal education, yet claimed to speak fluent Italian, Spanish, and Indian languages, and one reporter said he was "well versed in the higher branches of science and mathematics." He wrote letters to the various newspapers, some of them in poetry, protesting his innocence and pleading for clemency. The *Nebraska City News* became his champion, as well as several local church leaders, government officials, many society matrons, and casual visitors to his cell.

It was familiarity with their jailers that Dodge and Hardin decided to trust, however. They promised jailer Daniel Baldwin $2,000 if he would free them to rob the daily stage that came into Fort Lookout, Kansas. Baldwin permitted them to remove their leg irons and then bind and gag him. Baldwin claimed some

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masked intruders had entered the jail and overpowered him, but he said he had managed to wound one of them as they escaped with his prisoners. To make this story sound credible, he had sprinkled chicken blood on the floor of the jail cell.

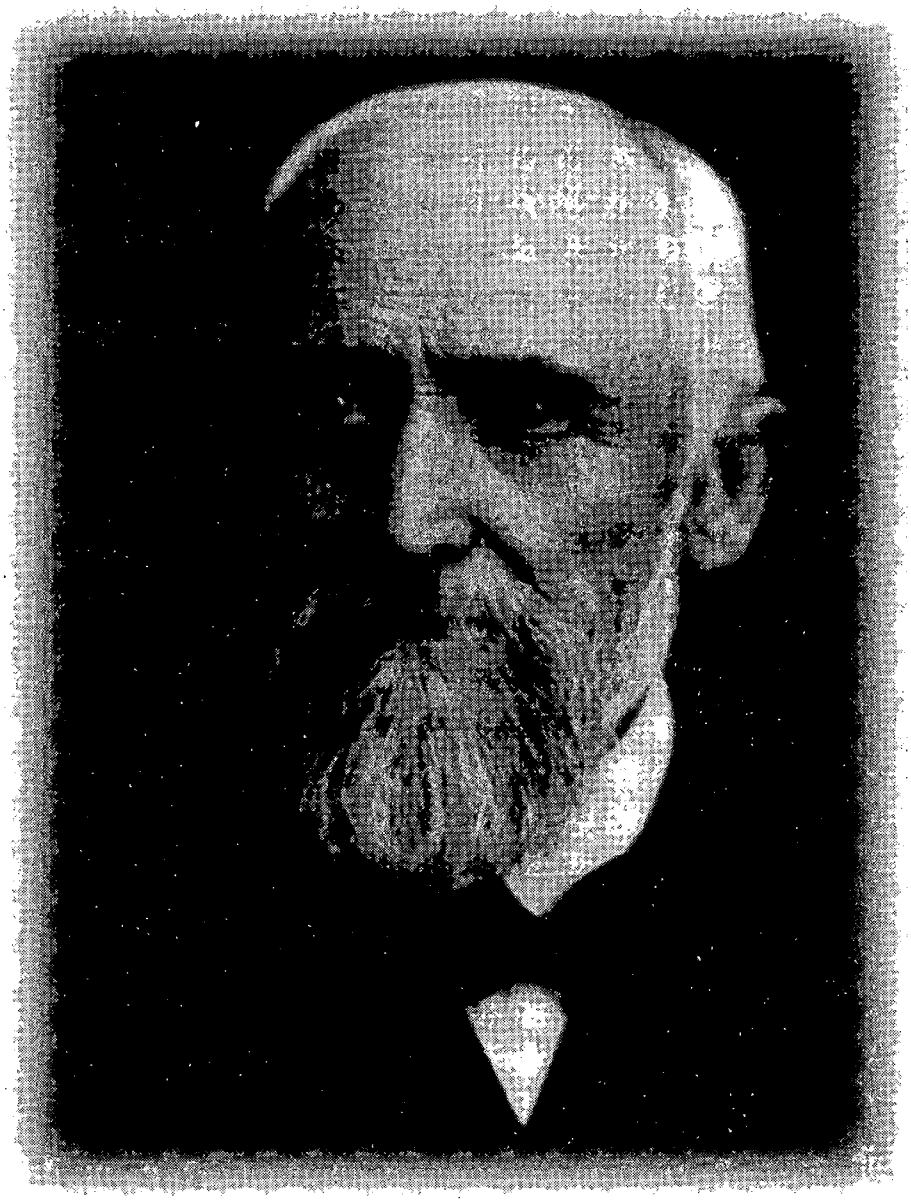
When Dodge and Hardin fled they took along another prisoner, a horse thief named Ferris. This proved to be their undoing. Ferris's horse could not keep up so Dodge and Hardin went on without him. Ferris then headed for Tecumseh, about twenty miles southwest of Nebraska City, and was soon re-arrested. He gave lawmen the information they needed to locate the other two men.

The governor heard of the escape and offered a reward of $200 each for the recapture of Dodge and Hardin, providing an extra incentive for law officers and their deputies. They soon cornered the men at the home of Ferris's father in Kansas. Peter McGuire was a part of the posse and assisted in the arrest.

Upon their return to the Otoe County jail, Sheriff Farber decided to make sure the men did not escape again by installing Peter McGuire as chief jailer. Dodge said he "would rather see the devil himself sitting there than that man Mcguire," and asked that McGuire be removed. The sheriff refused, but he did tell McGuire to stay out of sight and to leave the prisoners' personal care to the other jailers.

The case came to trial as scheduled on September 18 in the Otoe County District Court, with Judge Daniel Gantt presiding. The prisoners asked for separate trials. On the advice of his attorneys, Hardin, who had never been able to gain the sympathy of the townspeople as Dodge had, pleaded guilty to a second degree murder charge and cooperated with the prosecution in determining how James McGuire had met his death. He was sentenced to twenty-five years in the state penitentiary.

Dodge pleaded innocent, repudiating a confession he had given earlier that he had killed McGuire in self-defense. The jury deliberated for six hours before finding him guilty of murder in the first degree. Judge Gantt sentenced him to be hanged at mid-day, January 14, 1876. His attorneys unsuccessfully appealed the death sentence on a motion that the trial was in error because the records indicated Dodge was sentenced while he was absent from the courtroom. That contention apparently had no validity since the *Nebraska City News* had described his reaction to the sentence as, "Taking his seat, a noticeable tremor of his body and a twitching of his firm mouth were easily seen." Nevertheless, even though the Supreme Court refused to order a new trial, it did decree that Dodge should be brought back into court and re-sentenced.



Nebrask State Historical Society

Judge S.B. Pound presided over the re-sentencing of Hank Dodge.

On April 5, 1876, making sure that Dodge was in the courtroom this time, Judge Stephen B. Pound re-sentenced him "to be hung by the neck until dead on July 21, 1876." Judge Pound evidently sympathized with the condemned Dodge for it was reported that he made "touching and pertinent remarks" in passing sentence, which "brought many tears to the eyes of those who witnessed the scene."

Now editorials began to appear in various area newspapers opposing the death penalty. Sympathetic mail flowed into Dodge's cell. As the exe-

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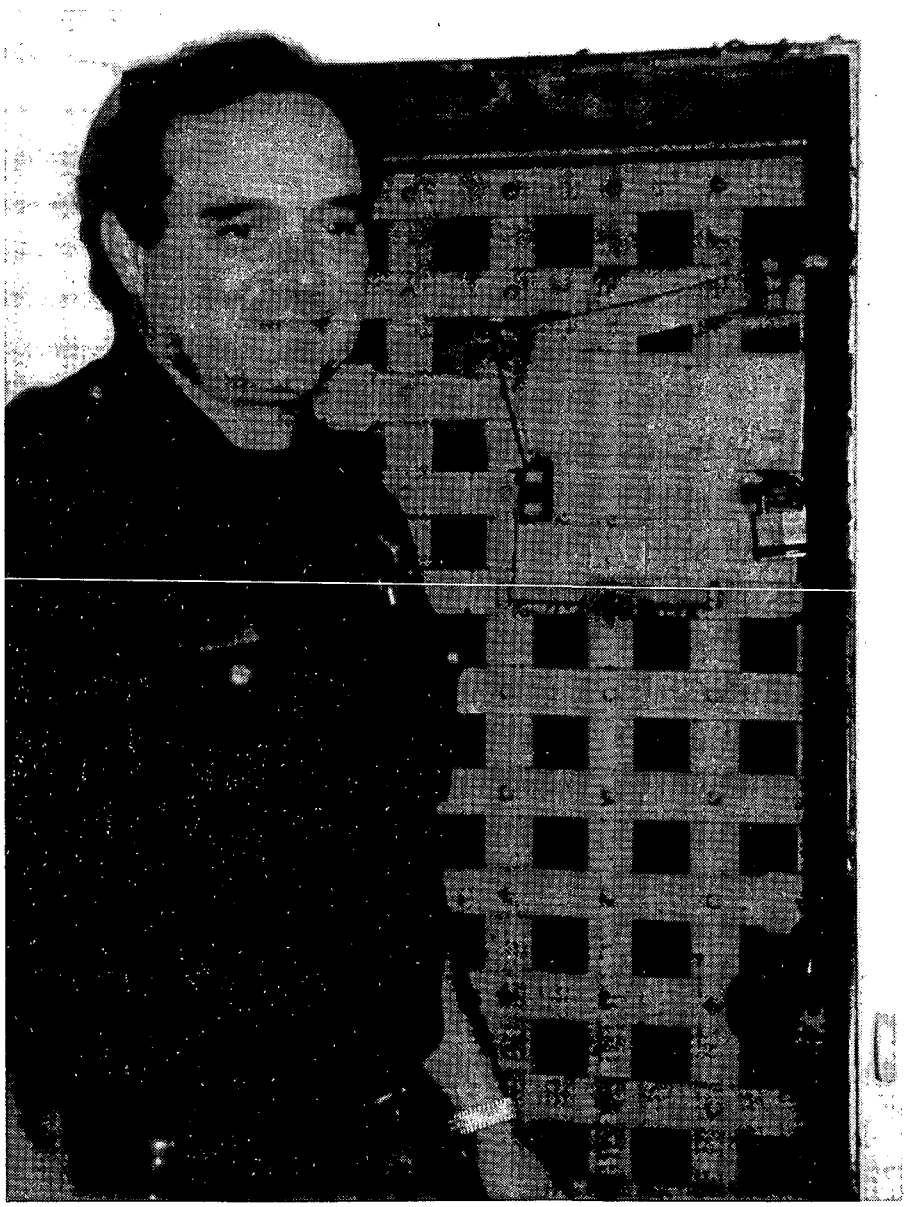
cution date neared, Mrs. George Covall, Mrs. Robert Hawke, and Mrs. John Croxton, three of the town's leading matrons, carried a petition to Governor Silas Garber's office signed by 130 women. Their petition stated that several people had visited Dodge in jail and had the impression that "he was not inherently vicious or criminally inclined, but rather a victim of circumstances, one who had never had much of a chance in life." They pleaded for commutation to life.

In early July both state and defense attorneys visited the governor's office concerning the matter. Peter McGuire was also present. The governor, having been bombarded by both sides, decided to go to Nebraska City to visit the young prisoner who had charmed so many folks. During their conversation, Dodge told the governor he had a blind sister and he was a nephew of Senator John B. Gordon of Georgia. Officials checked Dodge's story and found that Senator Gordon denied any relationship to Dodge and the blind sister did not exist.

The governor had given Dodge no promises of either a stay of execution or a commutation to life, but the fact that he had made the trip gave hope to those who opposed Dodge's execution. It also angered many others who felt Dodge was going to get away with murder.



Author's collection

Current Otoe County Sheriff Jim Gress standing beside "The Old Iron Cage" cell where Hank Dodge was kept. Today the cell is used for storage.

Between one and two o'clock in the morning on July 10, 1876, Peter McGuire stepped outside the jail to investigate an unusual noise. He was overpowered by a group of masked men who restrained him outside while three of them slipped into the jail, intimidated guard Robert White, and shot Dodge as he lay chained to his bunk asleep . He was struck twice in the body and once in the head.

Dodge was fatally wounded but he lingered until July 14, muttering incoherently most of the time, but occasionally lucid. During his last hours he repeated a request several times to jailer Wymond that his grave should be taken care of.

Wymond and the Reverend Thomas Lemon of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who had been acting as Dodge's spiritual advisor, made his funeral arrangements. Wymond suffered much criticism for supplying a silk-lined casket in place of a pine box and because he used a hearse rather than a wagon to carry Dodge's remains to the cemetery.

The *Omaha Bee News* had favored Dodge's execution but upon hearing of his assassination, editorialized that "it was, if anything, a more cold-blooded murder than the one for which Dodge had been sentenced." It went on to say that his killing should teach a lesson to those who clamored for his sentence to be commuted, for when the governor visited Dodge's cell, it gave the impression that he would escape hanging and that was why his life was taken. Then the editorial suggested this should serve as a warning to "sentimental inter-meddlers with justice."

Evidently those well-meaning ladies felt the same way, for one of them commented that their zeal had defeated their purpose and said it would be her last attempt to deal with a prison problem.

Some folks were convinced Peter McGuire was behind the killing, even though the *News* pointed out that it was incredible to think that

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he could be involved, especially since he had a multitude of opportunities to kill both Dodge and Hardin when they were his prisoners on the trail in Kansas and western Nebraska and did not do so.

A reward was offered for information leading to the arrest of the assassins but no information was forthcoming. Two fellow prisoners of Dodge's on that night refused to testify at the inquest for fear of retribution. The coroner's jury completed its work on July 21 and adjourned without finding any clues to the murder. It remains unsolved more than one hundred years later.

Twenty-three years after his brother's murder, Peter McGuire showed up on Frenchman Creek driving a team of horses that pulled a buckboard carrying a small white casket and some digging tools. He planned to find the bones of his brother and take them home to eastern Nebraska. He also planned to look for money he believed his brother may have buried near the camp where he was murdered. He said the brothers had an agreement that they would bury any valuables a certain distance from their camp site.

He remained in the area for two months before going home with neither bones nor money. Why he waited so long before searching was never explained.

Why was Hank Dodge able to garner so much support from the citizens of Nebraska City? There was a huge amount of evidence against him, and his two jailbreaks seemed to compound his guilt. Yet during his incarceration his popularity grew while Walter Hardin never seemed to be able to gain the respect of local citizens. Perhaps Dodge's young age and his handsome appearance played a part, but it was also a time when many churches concerned themselves with social movements. Many of the persons involved in trying to save him were reformers. Perhaps they saw it as a way to put their religion into practice. Certainly Dodge knew how to play upon their sympathies. He turned to religion when he saw his chances of release dimming and decorated the walls of his cell with religious pictures and sayings, impressing his visitors. He was said to be accomplished in the fields of art and music and local citizens often heard the sounds of a flute drifting out of the jail. Whatever it was that evoked the good intentions of the populace, it also resulted in his death.

Nebraska State Historical Society

Nebraska Governor Samuel Garber visited Dodge in his cell at Nebraska City, starting speculation that Dodge's death sentence would be commuted.

Peter McGuire lived to be eighty-four, but always refused to discuss his brother's murder or the aftermath killing of Dodge. He viewed the taking of Dodge's life as a matter that should have been left up to the state, and as the jailer, he felt responsible for what happened to Dodge. After his death, his wife wrote to the District Court of Otoe County requesting the papers in the case of Dodge and Hardin. The clerk of the court searched all his files and discovered the transcript had vanished. It was just another small mystery in a case that will be remembered as one of the most bizarre in Nebraska's history.

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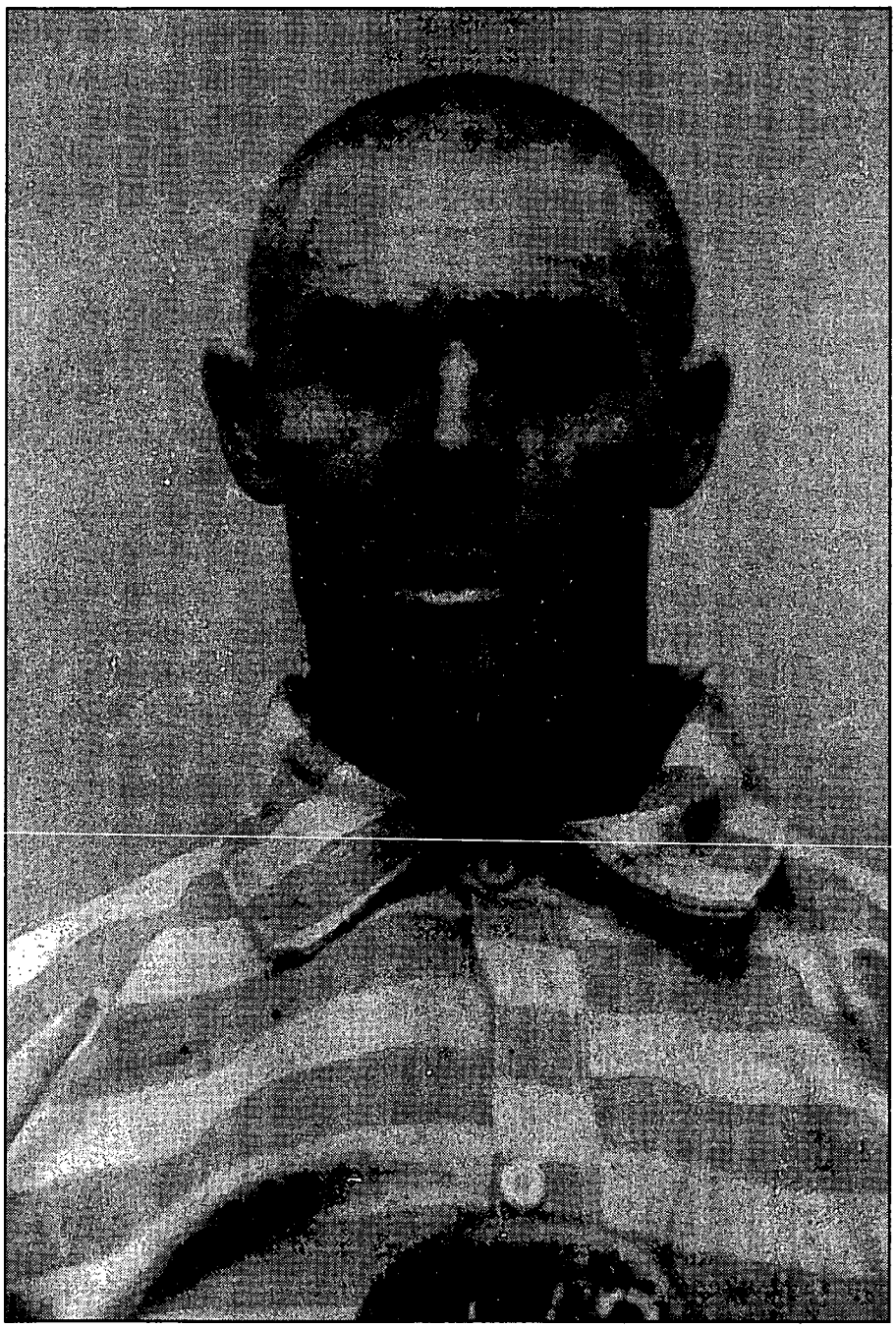
THE SHOOTOUT AT



Yuma Territorial Prison State Park

James Kerrick on his entry into Yuma Prison on November 29, 1898.

In 1907, at age thirty, John W. Cameron was a prosperous Arizona cattleman in southwestern Maricopa County. He and his eighty-year-old father grazed live stock over thousands of acres in Maricopa County and the northwestern part of adjoining Pima County. At the same time, Cameron was the constable of Agua Caliente township as well as Maricopa County deputy sheriff. On June 30, 1907, John Cameron and Arizona Ranger Frank Wheeler confronted horse thieves James Kerrick and Lee Bentley at a lonely water seep, and in the ensuing gunfight both outlaws were killed. The circumstances leading to, and surrounding, the shootout were unusual and strange, making the incident one of the more fascinating ones in Arizona history.

John Cameron was a product of the frontier. His father, George Washington Cameron, was born in Tennessee in 1827 and migrated to California prior to 1870. He settled in the Tehachapi mountains east of Bakersfield in Kern County, where he prospered in cattle ranching. He and his wife had three children: William A., born in 1875, John W., born in 1877, and Anna, born in 1879. Mrs. Cameron died that year, leaving the children in the care of a housekeeper. During the early 1880s, George Cameron moved his family to Arizona and settled in the desert stock-grazing region south of the Gila River in Maricopa County.

George Cameron did well in the cattle business and afforded his children excellent educations in a

By Harold L. Edwards

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HEEP DUNG TANKS

boarding school in Phoenix. When not attending school, John and his brother, William, helped on the family holdings and learned first-hand the ways of frontier Arizona. John was successful; however, William seems to have drifted away, and by 1896 or 1897 he appears not to have been involved in the family business.

In 1896 or 1897, James Kerrick, a hardcase from California, moved into the Agua Caliente district with his wife and three children. Kerrick made friends with William Cameron, and this friendship started a chain of events which in the end caused the violent deaths of both men.

Kerrick was no stranger to trouble. In 1877, he forged a bill of sale for a band of sheep in Tulare County, California. He was caught trying to sell the stolen sheep, and as a result he was arrested and convicted of forgery. He was sentenced to ten years in San Quentin prison. In 1878, the owner of the stolen sheep was found dead in his camp in the mountains east of Porterville. James Maher's body had several bullet holes in it, and a number of fired rifle cartridges were found near his remains. His brother, Michael, had disappeared at the same time, and never reappeared in any form. Kerrick was a ready suspect for the murder since he possessed the Maher sheep at the time of his arrest. Kerrick stood trial for murder in the Tulare County Superior Court in Visalia and was convicted. He was was sentenced to life in prison and entered San Quentin on October 8, 1878, as inmate number 8474. On May 8, 1884, he was transferred to Folsom prison. As prisoner number 819 he seems to have been

Jeff Edwards Collection

Arizona Ranger Frank Wheeler killed Lee Bentley during the gunfight at Sheep Dung Tanks

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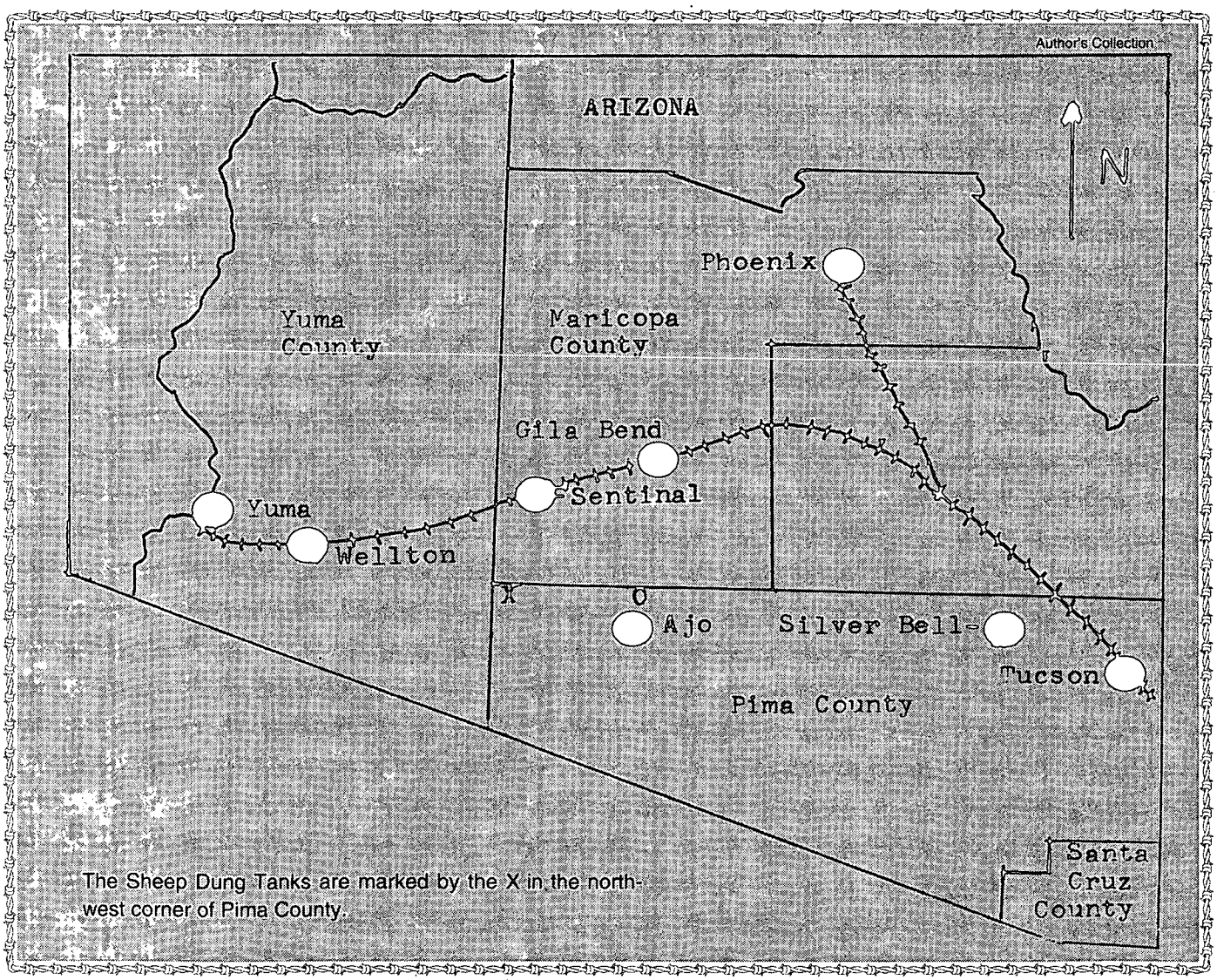
a model inmate, and on February 17, 1888, his sentence was commutted to twenty-five years and he was released. From the time of his release from prison to the time he arrived in Agua Caliente his whereabouts and activities are a mystery. In Agua Caliente he claimed to be a brick mason but soon established a reputation for being a horse and cattle thief.

In late 1897, James Kerrick, William Cameron, Josiah Anderson, and H.L. Tupper, also known as Martin Tupper, stole some cattle from ranches south of Gila Bend. All four of the men were indicted for the thefts. Cameron and Tupper quickly left the country; Tupper to surface later that year in Los Angeles, California, where he tried to slip a pistol into the jail where an old crony, Kid Thompson, the noted train robber and murderer, was held. Tupper was arrested for trying to aid Thompson's escape and was sent to San Quentin. Kerrick and Anderson spent some time in jail but never went to trial on the charges. By 1898, William Cameron returned to Agua Caliente and remained free from arrest.

During early November 1898, Kerrick and William Cameron stole thirty-five horses from H.R. Wills, Leon Imperial and Jose Arvista in the Agua Caliente district and herded them toward the Mexican border. The rustlers were in no hurry as it was necessary to graze the horses along the way. However, the thefts were discovered and a posse was organized to pursue the thieves. Kerrick and Cameron were overtaken by the posse in Pima County near the Mexican border and arrested by Julio Martinez and Abran Molino. The stolen horses were returned to their owners and Kerrick and Cameron were convicted of felony theft in the district court in Phoenix. Both defendants were sentenced to five years in the territorial prison at Yuma. They arrived at the prison on November 29, 1898, James Kerrick as prisoner number 1443 and William Cameron as prisoner number 1444. Kerrick was paroled on June 19 1900, with specific orders to leave Arizona immediately; however, he either didn't leave or he briefly appeared in Texas because he soon resided as before in Agua Caliente with his family. He was not arrested for parole violation. William Cameron



The Sheep Dung Tanks are marked by the X in the northwest corner of Pima County.

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was pardoned from prison on February 16, 1902, and also returned to Agua Caliente.

Undoubtedly to the consternation of his father and brother, William Cameron couldn't stay out of trouble. In June, 1902, some four months after his release from prison, William was charged by C.D. Wills with changing brands on some of Wills' cattle. Cameron placed his own brand on the stolen cattle. He was arrested, and in the preliminary hearing, Wills stated that Cameron not only changed the brands on the cattle but stole them as well. Cameron denied the charges and the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

However, Wills persisted that Cameron stole his cattle and threatened civil action against him. Both parties agreed to settle the matter by arbitration, and, curiously, an ex-convict from Yuma prison, Josiah Anderson, who was convicted of assault with the intent to commit murder in 1899 and pardoned in 1900, was chosen as the arbitrator. He was the same Josiah Anderson who had been indicted along with Kerrick and William Cameron for cattle theft in 1897.

The interested parties met in a saloon in Agua Caliente to settle the matter, and after hearing testimony Anderson ruled against Cameron. They adjourned to the bar for a drink, but Cameron drank very little and left later that night for his residence. On the way home, Cameron was overtaken by Josiah Anderson and Robert Leach. The argument over the stolen cattle resumed and Anderson shot and killed Cameron. Anderson surrendered himself for trial, claiming he killed Cameron in self-defense, as Cameron had reached for his gun. However, the officers wondered how Anderson could see Cameron reaching for his gun in the dark. Besides, Cameron's body was found laying on his pistol with the gun still in its holster, the hammer strap still fastened. Anderson was arrested for murder. During the trial the prosecution claimed that since his release from prison William Cameron had been law-abiding and had caused no trouble. James Kerrick testified for the prosecution by giving William Cameron a good character reference. Anderson was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five and one-half years in the prison at Yuma. The local newspapers implied that the entire incident was the result of a feud between cattlemen, but they gave no particulars on it. John Cameron decided to stay out of William's troubles.

James Kerrick was certainly no stranger to John Cameron when he and Lee Bentley rode into the Cameron ranch headquarters in early June of 1907. Kerrick and Cameron were on decent terms even though they may not have been friends. Kerrick introduced Cameron to Bentley, and he claimed that they had been prospecting between there and the Mexican border. Kerrick further

Arizona Historical Society

Deputy Sheriff John Cameron killed Lee Bentley during the shootout at Sheep Dung Tanks.

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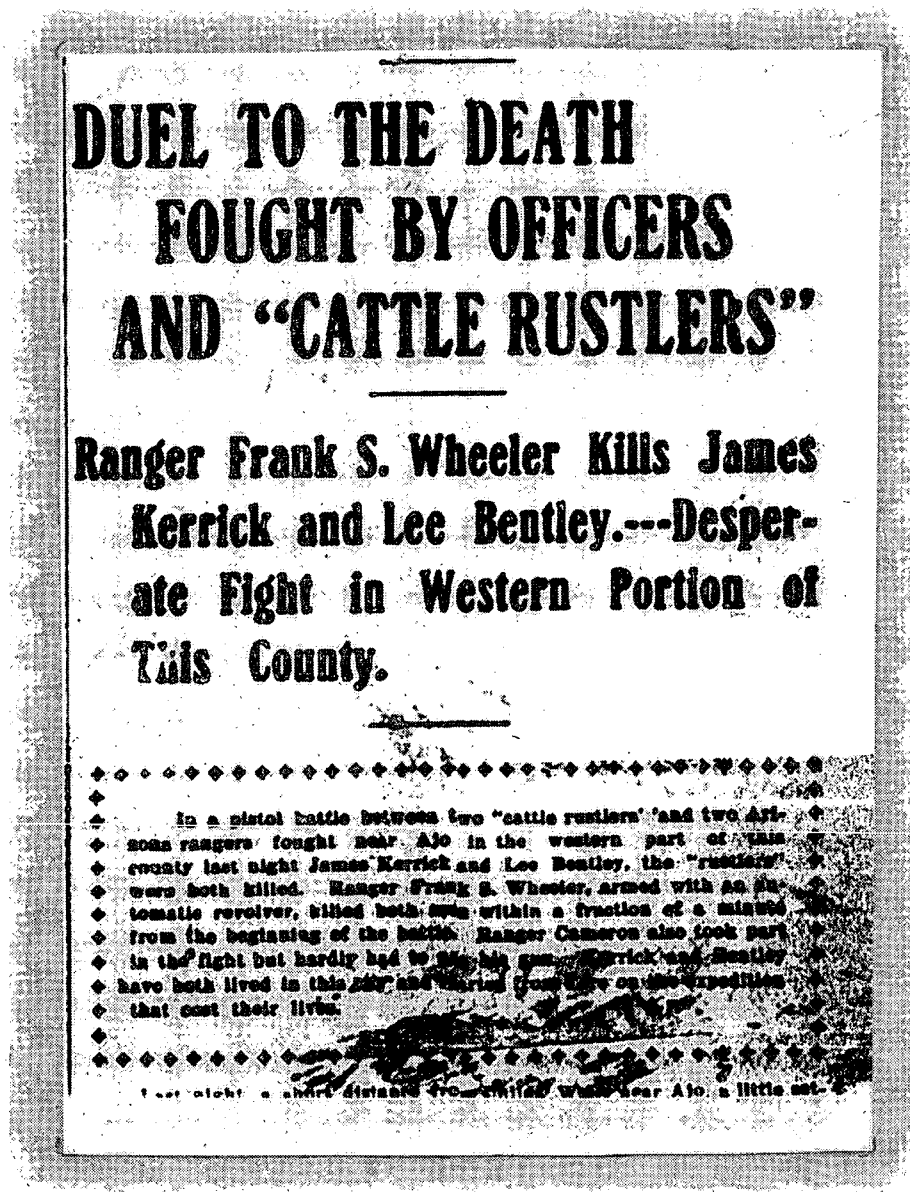
stated that he and Bentley were destitute and needed a grubstake. Cameron told them to go to a nearby store and get what they needed and charge the purchases to him. Later that day, Cameron met Kerrick and Bentley at the store and paid the bill. Kerrick asked Cameron if he and Bentley could shoe their horses at the Cameron ranch, and Cameron said that they could. However, Kerrick and Bentley rode on without returning to the Cameron ranch.

In May 1907, Kerrick and Bentley told a number of acquaintances in Tucson and Gila Bend that they were going prospecting in the region between the Gila River and Mexico. It was assumed that by "prospecting" they meant a search for mineral deposits rather than a search for someone else's livestock. At Gila Bend, they rented two horses from a Papago Indian, Ignacio. Kerrick and Bentley promised Ignacio they would pay him one dollar per day for the use of each horse for a period of five days, at which time the horses would be returned and payment would be made. The five days had long expired when Kerrick and Bentley rode into Cameron's yard. It was apparent that they had no intentions of returning the horses to the owner.

About one week after Kerrick and Bentley left the Cameron ranch, Ignacio and his brother, Jose, rode into the Cameron ranch headquarters with a note to John Cameron from a Mr. Fry of Gila Bend. The letter explained that Ignacio had complained to Fry about the theft of the horses, and Fry asked Cameron to help the Indians recover the mounts. Jose advised John Cameron of the bargain his brother had made with Kerrick and Bentley and that the two men had never returned the horses. This was the first Cameron knew of the thefts; although, he had discovered that his spurs had been stolen from his tack room on the same day Kerrick and Bentley had been at the ranch.

Cameron had no idea where Kerrick and Bentley were at the moment. He remained at his ranch while the Indians rode on in search of the stolen horses. A couple of days later Cameron received a letter from a friend, Thomas Childs, a cattleman in the Ajo area of Pima County, stating that he had seen Kerrick and Bentley and that one of them was wearing Cameron's spurs. Childs went on to write that Kerrick and Bentley were at Cipriano Well in Pima County. Also about this time, Cameron began receiving reports from some local cattlemen that Kerrick was stealing their horses.

Cameron wrote a note to Maricopa County Sheriff, Carl Hayden, later Arizona's perennial United States senator, and asked him for help in stopping the thieves before they reached the Mexican border. Hayden replied that he didn't have the resources to do that, and, besides, the thieves were out of his jurisdiction in Pima County. However, Sheriff Hayden immediately requested Arizona Governor Nathan O. Murphy for the help of the Arizona Rangers in stopping the thieves. Murphy refused to help as he felt the outlaws would cross the border into Mexico before the



DUEL TO THE DEATH FOUGHT BY OFFICERS AND "CATTLE RUSTLERS"

Ranger Frank S. Wheeler Kills James Kerrick and Lee Bentley.---Desperate Fight in Western Portion of This County.

In a pistol battle between two "cattle rustlers" and two Arizona rangers fought near Ajo in the western part of this county last night James Kerrick and Lee Bentley, the "rustlers" were both killed. Ranger Frank S. Wheeler, armed with an automatic revolver, killed both men within a fraction of a minute from the beginning of the battle. Ranger Cameron also took part in the fight but hardly had to [illegible] Kerrick and Bentley have both lived in this [illegible] on the expedition that cost their lives.

Author's Collection

The shootout at Sheep Dung Tanks made headline news in the July 7, 1907, issue of the *Tucson Citizen.*

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Rangers could overtake them.

In the meantime, Arizona Ranger Captain Harry Wheeler received a letter at his headquarters in Cochise County from several citizens in Maricopa County saying that James Kerrick and an unidentified rider were traveling south and that both men were heavily armed. The letter went on to say that Kerrick was a known badman and that the citizens were afraid that the riders were up to no good and should be investigated. Wheeler quickly wrote a letter to Ranger Private Frank S. Wheeler, no relation, in Yuma and asked him to look into the matter. Frank Wheeler was on business in Gila Bend and didn't immediately see the letter from his superior. Several days later Captain Wheeler received a communique from Sheriff Hayden identifying the suspects as Kerrick and Bentley, which Captain Wheeler already knew, and saying that they stole a bunch of horses in Maricopa County. The sheriff relayed that he had dispatched Deputy John Cameron to pursue the outlaws. Wheeler wrote another letter to the private advising him of the latest information on the thieves and directing him to work with Deputy Cameron on the matter. Also, Captain Wheeler specifically directed Private Wheeler to arrest Kerrick and Bentley if he found them with stolen horses in their possession.

Ranger Frank Wheeler was an excellent choice for the assignment even if he didn't know Kerrick and Bentley. Not only could he work well with John Cameron, who was also his personal friend, but he was an experienced officer who was familiar with the terrain and conditions of southwestern Arizona. The Mississippi native had been an Arizona Ranger since September 10, 1902, and had vast experience around Yuma and Gila Bend.

On June 27, 1907, Frank Wheeler returned to his home in Yuma and read both of Captain Wheeler's letters. He immediately wired Deputy Cameron to meet him in Sentinal, a rail stop in southwestern Maricopa County on the Southern Pacific railroad line between Yuma and Phoenix. Cameron received Wheeler's wire in Agua Caliente, and he sent a wire to Mr. Fry in Gila Bend asking him, if possible, to have Ignacio and Jose meet him and Wheeler at Thomas Childs' ranch at Ten Miles Wells north of Ajo, presumably to identify the stolen horses if Kerrick and Bentley were overtaken. Ignacio and Jose had trailed Kerrick and Bentley into Mexico and back into Pima County before they abandoned the trail and returned to Gila Bend. Fry was successful in contacting the brothers and that night they rode into the Childs ranch headquarters. Meanwhile, Cameron met Wheeler in Sentinal with mounts and provisions as requested. That night they rode to the Childs ranch in order to avoid the daytime desert heat. They met Igancio and Jose there and the men planned their campaign to apprehend the thieves.

After discussing the matter, the Indians rode into the early morning darkeness in hopes of locating the outlaw trail. They tracked the outlaws to Bato's Well, near the town of the same name, and they waited for the arrival of Wheeler and Cameron. The lawmen arrived later in the day and the Indians told them that Kerrick and Bentley had been there but had ridden on with the stolen horses.

The posse tracked Kerrick and Bentley through rough, barren country into the northwestern reaches of Pima County. The Indians located the outlaws' camp at a water hole in a box canyon known as Sheep Dung Tanks, or in polite society as Sheep Tanks.

The posse tracked Kerrick and Bentley through rough, barren country into the northwestern reaches of Pima County. The Indians located the outlaws' camp at a water hole in a box canyon known as Sheep Dung Tanks, or in polite society as Sheep Tanks.

The spring was located on the side of a bluff and the seeping water formed in pools lower down. Certain that the outlaws were camped at the pools, the posse left their horses some distance from the camp and crept through the dark of early morning to the bluff above the canyon in stocking feet in order to make less noise and not alert the sleeping thieves to the officer's approach. Positioned above the camp, the lawmen waited for dawn.

When there was enough light for vision, the officers observed four horses and a mule by the water. Ignacio identified two of the horses as belonging to him. They also saw one man, later identified as Bentley, sleeping in a bedroll by the horses. Looking around, they saw the other outlaw sleeping about one hundred yards up the draw. As the Indians were not officers, they moved to higher ground, out of the way. Wheeler moved to a position about fifty feet from Cameron.

Wheeler called on the sleeping outlaws to surrender, as Bentley reached for his rifle. When Wheeler called on the outlaws once more to surrender, Bentley fired a shot at Wheeler and Wheeler fired his rifle at Bentley. Both men missed. Bentley raised to one knee and aimed his rifle at Wheeler. Both Wheeler and Cameron shot at Bentley, who was struck in the midsection and arm. Wounded, Bentley still tried to fight by raising his gun again to shoot at the officers. There was shooting from both sides, and Wheeler's fifth shot hit Bentley in the head, killing him instantly. In the meantime, Wheeler and Cameron opened fire on Kerrick. Wheeler missed but Cameron killed Kerrick with a well-placed shot to the body.

The country was rugged, and there was no way to get a wagon

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Arizona Historical Society

Sheriff Nabor Pacheco refused to arrest John Cameron and Frank Wheeler for killing James Kerrick and Lee Bentley.

down to the camp to haul the bodies away. The summer heat prohibited waiting for officials to conduct a coroner's inquest on the scene. It was necessary to move the bodies to a more desirable place quickly. The lawmen lashed the dead bodies across the saddles of the horses they had been riding, and herding the other stolen stock, they rode twenty-two miles to Thomas Childs' ranch.

Ignacio's horses were recovered as were the horses of Mariano Jaques and Francisco Lopez. The stolen mule belonged to the Cipriano estate, and Cameron recovered his stolen spurs from the outlaw camp. The dead men had a total of ten cents between them when they were killed, and it wasn't resolved whether or not they sold previously stolen horses while they were in Mexico. At the time of the recovery, Jaques, Lopez, and the manager of the Cipriano estate did not know their animals had been stolen.

Thomas Childs dispatched one of his riders on to the Ajo mine, and officials of the mine had him transported to Gila Bend in a company automobile. From Gila Bend the cowboy wired Pima County Sheriff Nabor Pacheco in Tucson of the killings. While the cowboy and his driver waited, Sheriff Pacheco entrained to Gila Bend. Sheriff Pacheco loaded the car with ice in hope of preserving the bodies of the dead outlaws until a coroner's inquest could be held, and as fast as possible he was driven to the Childs' ranch.

In the meantime, it was apparent to Childs and the officers that the desert heat was taking its toll on the bodies, and it would be necessary to bury the bodies as soon as the sheriff arrived. Wheeler built two boxes from rough lumber and a blanket was laid on the bottom of each. Kerrick and Bentley were placed in the boxes and blankets were laid over each body.

Sheriff Pacheco had been unsuccessful in getting the coroners of Pima, Maricopa, and Yuma counties to hold the inquest as each of them felt the killings occurred in another

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county and was out of their jurisdiction. That was the reason the sheriff wanted to try and preserve the bodies until this dilemma could be resolved; however, after he viewed them it was apparent that burial should be immediate. Childs had two of his employees dig graves on a slope north of his headquarters and the dead men were interred.

Sheriff Pacheco, who ordered the burials, felt that the killings occurred in Pima County, and so did Wheeler and Cameron. Since there was no coroner's inquests, both Cameron and Wheeler offered to surrender to Sheriff Pacheco and stand trial on the shootings. However, Sheriff Pacheco felt the shootings were justified and he refused to arrest the two men. All three lawmen returned to their homes feeling that they had done their duty and that the assignment was behind them.

It was necessary to move the bodies to a more desirable place quickly. The lawmen lashed the dead bodies across the saddles of the horses they had been riding, and herding the other stolen stock, they rode twenty-two miles to Thomas Childs' ranch.

However, the killings at Sheep Dung Tanks were not settled yet. W.L. Bentley, a brother to the slain Lee Bentley, questioned the officers' reports on the matter. This might have been encouraged by the confused, distorted, and garbled press accounts of the incident.

W.L. Bentley said that the officers shot his brother and Kerrick without provocation and without giving them a chance to surrender. He asked for a coroner's inquest or an investigation into the matter to determine the facts of the case. He further stated that Kerrick and his brother were not horse thieves but that they had rented their mounts from the Indians at the rate of one dollar per day for a prospecting trip. His sentiments were published in the local press. W.L. Bentley pressed the Pima County district attorney for action on the matter, and he agreed that an inquest was in order.

The coroner's inquest was held on August 18, 1907, in Silver Bell by Justice of the Peace John Doan acting as coroner. Wheeler and Cameron testified at length and in detail. Curiously, J.D. Simmons, Lee Bentley's brother-in-law, was allowed to question Wheeler. Among the questions he asked was if Wheeler had an arrest warrant for Bentley and Kerrick when the shootings occurred. This question, of course, was designed to imply that the officers had no jurisdiction or authority to arrest the deceased. Wheeler answered that he and Cameron had no warrant at the time of the gunfight but he had orders from his superior officer to arrest Kerrick and Bentley if they had stolen horses in their possession, and they did. Simmons also asked why the bodies were removed from the shooting scene. Wheeler stated that the bodies had to be removed from the spring as there was no way to preserve the remains and the desert heat was taking its toll.

Mrs. J.D. Simmons was also allowed to question Cameron. Among other questions, she asked if the bodies of her brother and Kerrick were rolled into blankets when they were put in coffins. Cameron answered yes, and she then asked why the bodies of the dead men were removed from the gunfight scene. This question implied that there was evidence at the scene to show that Bentley and Kerrick were murdered and the bodies were removed so others wouldn't see the evidence. Cameron responded to the question as did Wheeler earlier but added that if they left the bodies in the canyon coyotes would eat them. Mrs. Simmons responded by saying, "That wouldn't have made any difference to you fellows, would it?" Cameron replied, "Yes Ma'am, it would to me."

Ignacio and Jose testified through an interpreter, telling of the transaction between Ignacio, Kerrick, and Bentley. They also described the gunfight at Sheep Dung Tanks and said that Wheeler called twice for the outlaws to surrender before the shooting started. Captain Wheeler testled that he ordered Frank Wheeler to arrest Kerrick and Bentley if they had stolen horses in their possession.

It was found by the coroner's jury that James Kerrick and Lee Bentley were wanted by the law for horse theft. The jury further decided the officers were justified in the killings as they were in pursuance of their duties when the shootings occurred, and, further, the lawmen killed Kerrick and Bentley to preserve their own lives. The matter was settled.

John W. Cameron served a total of fifteen years as a deputy sheriff and constable. However, his first vocation was raising cattle. He sold the original Cameron cattle ranch in 1938, but he continued ranching around Ajo until his death in 1955. He was well-known in Arizona ranching circles for improving his stock and for running a successful business. He married and he and his wife had six children. At the time of his death he was considered a successful Arizona pioneer, but it was less known that almost half of a century before, as an officer of the law, he shot and killed James Kerrick at Sheep Dung Tanks, ending a criminal's career.

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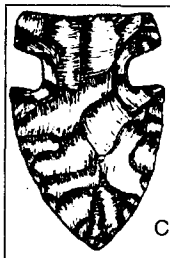

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REVIEWS

In Their Own Words

In Their Own Words: Warrior and Pioneers, collected and edited by T. J. Stiles. (Perigree Books, The Berkley Publishing Group, 200 Madison Ave., New York, New York 10016. $14.00 paper bound.)

This book is the second volume of a planned three-volume series of "In Their Own Words" anthologies to be published under the Perigree label. The first volume of the series was the author's *Civil War Commanders.* The concept of the series is to develop a realistic history of an area and an era, free of heroic or romantic interpretations, by integrating contemporary first person accounts of the period and region with bridging commentary by the editor based on the best of current scholarship.

Warriors and Pioneers includes writings in the time frame from 1843 to 1892. The authors are broadly divided between native Americans, soldiers, scouts, settlers and travellers, and gunfighters. The range of material covered can be discerned from the fact that the first account is from Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* and the last is from Emmett Dalton's *When the Daltons Last Rode.*

The broad thesis of the book is based on the concept of the "Western Civil War of Incorporation," as developed by Richard Maxwell Brown in his various writings, and succinctly summarized in his introduction to this work. Essentially this civil war had two parts: the first was the army's intervention in the conflict between the land's indigenous occupants and the westward-moving white settlers. This resulted in breaking the Indian military power and transforming the land and its ecosystem.The second was the internal struggle for control of the land between the various factions striving to control it and its wealth. Thirty-eight well known, first person accounts compose the bulk of the book. The editor's excellent transition commentary between these narratives makes for a single, seamless story. There is always a sense of time and perspective in first person accounts that is difficult to duplicate, and Stiles' selection of material is outstanding. Most readers will be familiar with some, or possibly even all, of his choices. After reading these extracts in this frame of reference, the originals will never be read quite the same way; they will have a whole new meaning. Although the time frame of this book ends with 1892, with some logic it could be argued that neither of the two parts of the "Civil War of Incorporation" is really over. Perhaps Indian activism and the Sage Brush Rebellion are actually the two aspects of the same civil war in a different form.

One possible criticism of the book is the lack of the woman's point of view. Of the selections, only two excerpts from Fanny Kelley's book are by a woman. There were many astute female observers of the frontier whose letters, diaries, and books were both articulate and insightful, in most cases without the bias, prejudice, or braggadocio of some of the male authors. Mr. Stiles undoubtedly would find a wide readership for a book using the same editorial techniques with solely feminine sources. It certainly would make an interesting companion volume.—*Murray L. Carroll, Anacortes, Washington.*

Tales From the Pecos

Graveyard of the West: The Pecos River of Texas, by Patrick Dearen. (Forest Glen Productions; distributed by TCU Press, Austin, TX. $29.95 Video.)

This excellent video, featuring

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Patrick Dearen and Mike Cox as guides, is an hour-long historical traipse along the bleak banks of the Pecos River in west Texas. In its lower reaches, far from New Mexico's mountains, it is surely the most miserable excuse for a river this side of Nevada's Humboldt. Yet it is one of the most interesting streams in the West. After all, the Old West was said to begin "West of the Pecos."

Dearen and Cox show that history ran headlong into myth and legend on the banks of Pecos Bill's shallow and alkaline watercourse. The film's production is good, shifting from the landscape today to historical still-photos and occasional "talking heads." Most of these are old-timers who are cattlemen, but a couple of our better historians, Ed Bartholomew and Bob Utley, are also featured.

The heart of the story is Horsehead Crossing and the trails that hit the Pecos there, starting with the Comanche War Trail. The ford's name came from the litter of skulls left behind by Indian horse rustlers. Gold-hungry 49ers came next, followed by Butterfield stagecoaches, the Goodnight-Loving cattle herds, and the military, the latter laying out a road from Fort Lancaster to Fort Stockton via the riverine outpost of Fort Helbourno. Finally came the tracks of the Southern Pacific's iron horse, but crossing the river much lower down, at the High Bridge over the great gorge at the mouth of this tributary and the Rio Grande.

The lower Pecos country was a violent one. Comanches raided emigrants, the stage station, and the Army outpost. The area became a hangout for train robbers and other badmen, Barney Riggs, Jim Miller, Clay Allison, and Black Jack Ketchum. The river was treacherous, itself, with steep, caving banks that precipitated thirst-maddened livestock into the bad water that ran faster and deeper in the days before

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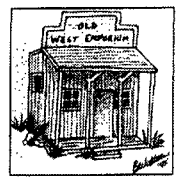

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dams, ditches, and pumps. Many horses and cattle found watery graves in its quicksand.

The longest-lived legend of the area is the story of Castle Gap's treasure. Supposedly, ex-Confederates were hired as guards by Maximilian of Mexico, but turned land pirates when they learned they were escorting the emperor's gold. They murdered the teamsters, cached the gold in the Gap, them got themselves killed. The hiding place remains a mystery to this day.

There is more, such as stampedes and Judge Roy Bean. New to most of us will be Horsehead's rivals, like Salt Crossing, Indian Ford, and Pope's Crossing, the last-named for its remarkable Ponteon Bridge, hung on chains.

Don't miss this video. It's a good 'un, just as Elmer Kelton says on the cassette's box.—*Richard H. Dillon Mill Valley, California.*

Rocky Mountain Wagon Train

Where Rivers Meet: Lore from the Colorado Frontier, by Muriel Marshall. (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843-4354. $32.95 hard cover; $16.95 paper bound.)

"They gathered at the last stop before the Indian reservation. Teams everywhere. Flocks of covered wagons, like white geese, all pointed one way–west. Axles greased, tongues hanging. Ready. Waiting," writes Muriel Marshall in her opening lines of *Where Rivers Meet.* On that particular day the wagons were pointed toward the confluence of the Gunnison and Uncompahgre rivers, near the present site of the city of Delta on Colorado's Western Slope.

What follows is not a history per se, for Marshall dispenses with the chronological order and event-related structure that characterizes conventional histories. Instead, the author presents an extensive collection of vignettes of regional lore that reflect the growth and development, as well as the social and cultural interaction, that took place at the confluence of these rivers.

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In melding people and place, the book is notable for its human diversity. Among the individuals recounted in *Where Rivers Meet* are Utes, early Spanish explorers and French trappers, traders, settlers, farmers and fruit growers, business people, Vietnam veterans, and paleontologists. While providing much insight into frontier life, Marshall leads the reader easily in and out of the present, establishing a continuity of time that lends the frontier era a poignancy and relevance.

The lesson of the book may be that little has really changed in more than a century at the confluence of the Gunnison and Uncompahgre rivers. In the beginning, the Utes resisted the arrival of Anglo settlers, who in turn themselves later resisted civilization's encroachment. And that enduring resistance may define the essential character of the American West, past and present. Even today, Marshall's local residents continue to adhere to their traditions rather than embrace the encroachment of urbanization.

The book, 218 pages long, contains twenty-one photographs, and is casual but witty. The book is fun to read, I suspect because the author found the book fun to write.

Collections of lore, such as *Where Rivers Meet*, are valuable additions to western libraries, as they fill many gaps that exist in conventional regional histories. Marshall's book would serve as a fine model of style and structure for other authors to follow in preserving the lore of other western localities.—*Steve Voynick, Leadville, Colorado.*

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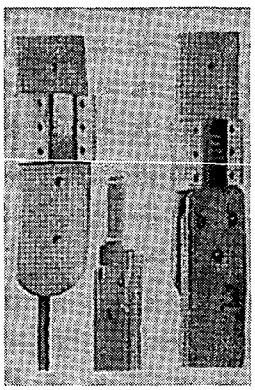

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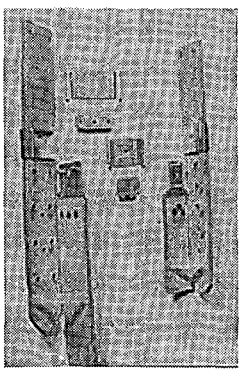

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ANSWER MAN

"Hold on to those old copies of T

Nearly half a decade ago, in the July 1990 "Answer Man" column, I published a letter from Larry J. Walker about collecting western magazines. Larry had gathered hundreds of copies of the many "true western" magazines so prevalent during the 1950s and was attempting to alert collectors around the world that he could assist them in completing their own collections. Larry is still going strong with that hobby, and has recently began started his own *Western Magazine Collectors Newsletter* which features articles and news bits about many facets of collecting western magazines. The premiere issue highlighted Joe "Hosstail" Small who founded *True West* over four decades ago.

Larry said about this new venture, "The publication is the fulfillment of a dream, a major step forward for the emerging hobby of western magazine collecting." Besides editing the newsletter, Walker has written a booklet on the subject, *Western Magazine Price Guide*, to assist collectors in determining the value of given issues. Before you casually toss out that bunch of old western magazines in the attic check out their value. Issue number one of *True West* in mint condition might help pay the rent!

To learn more about the present status of western magazine collecting and how you can contribute to his new publication contact Larry at PO Box 36, La Pine, Oregon 97739.

Ford Attends a Funeral

The subject of Jesse James and related gang members continues to be of great interest. Recently a question concerning the Ford brothers and Jesse's funeral was raised. From long time James brothers enthusiast Emmett C. Hoetot, Plattsmouth, Nebraska, comes a question dealing with a pallbearer at Jesse's funeral...his first funeral, not the most recent one following the DNA testing.

Mr. Hoetot recently found a newspaper account of the funeral which listed the pallbearers. One of them was identified as J.T. Ford. He wonders if this Ford had any connection to Robert and Charles Ford who killed Jesse on April 3, 1882.

I may be stepping on real thin ice with this but from checking with various sources, including William T. Settle's *Jesse James Was His Name*, considered to be one of the most authoritative books on the outlaw, I will state that J.T. Ford, full name James Thomas Ford, was the father of Robert and Charles Ford. Why Jesse's mother would allow the father of her son's murderers to have this position is unknown.

Very little is known of James Thomas Ford. There were at least two other children, a daughter named Martha, who married a Mr. Bolton, and a son named John T. Both the father and son were known commonly as "J.T."

Although it has been written that the James and Ford boys were related, they were not. If a reader can provide a good answer as to why Bob and Charley Ford's father was a pallbearer at Jesse James' funeral we would appreciate knowing it.

The Roughest Riders

It is always good to receive questions from contributors to Western Publications. Roy P. O'Dell, Cambridge, England, inquires about "Torrey's Rough Riders," which operated during the Spanish-American War. Presumably several of the Butch Cassidy gang joined that outfit to fight for the American interest.

It is generally accepted that some outlaws wanted to enlist in Torrey's Rough Riders, three regiments of volunteer cavalry which were sent to

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'e West, boys...they might be worth something."

Cuba. They were reportedly outstanding horsemen. The consideration for the outlaws was that if they served their country, they would then receive pardons for any crimes committed. It is not easy to document any of this plan. While some outlaws may have felt a desire to "Remember the Maine!"it is hard to visualize an outlaw submitting to military discipline. Characteristically outlaws were unable to abide by the rules; the rules of the military are much more strict than society.

Although it is possible some men "on the run" did join up I doubt if it can be verified. I would appreciate knowing if any of the Butch Cassidy gang joined up with Torrey's "Rough Riders" or enlisted in the army under the name by which they were charged with a crime.

Butch's Buddy

Tim Palmieri, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, inquires about an obscure outlaw by the name of Al Hainer, a "Wild Bunch" gang member. He was an associate of Butch Cassidy but only for a short time.

On June 24, 1889, Cassidy was one of the gang which robbed the San Miguel Valley Bank in Telluride, Colorado. With what money he saved and his share of the Tellunde loot, Cassidy and another cowboy, Al Hainer, bought a horse ranch in the Wind River country of Wyoming.

In 1893 both Hainer and Cassidy were arrested for horse theft but were acquitted. In 1894 they were arrested again. Hainer was again acquitted, and Cassidy was found guilty and sentenced to two years in Wyoming's state prison. No doubt Cassidy suspected Hainer of having double-crossed him. Whether there was treachery involved has never been determined, but Al Hainer, at least under that name, does not appear again.

Riding with the Hash Knife

"Was there a Hash Knife Gang?" This question comes from Edna Williams, Viola, Arkansas. She continues by asking when it operated and if Billy the Kid rode with the gang?

It depends on whether or not the word "gang" is meant as an outlaw group or just a bunch of cowboys who overindulged occasionally. The real name of the ranch known as the Hash Knife was the Aztec Land and Cattle Company. According to historian Bill O'Neal, the ranch grazed 50,000 cattle and 2,000 horses on its two-million-acre range located eighty miles east of

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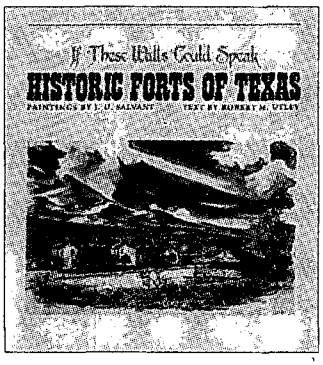

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Holbrook, Arizona. Burton Mossman, best known as an Arizona Ranger captain, was manager of this ranch in late 1897.

Mossman found that the quality of the men employed on the Hash Knife didn't meet his standards. After his initial investigation he fired the foreman and fifty-two of the eighty-four working cowboys. Mossman was, at the same time, a deputy sheriff and he sent a dozen rustlers to Yuma prison. Were some of those rustlers former Hash Knife cowboys? Perhaps. Did the cowboys sometimes "paint the town red" and thus earn the nickname of a gang? Perhaps. But the boys who worked the Hash Knife never were the criminals on par with the Daltons, the Black Jack gang, or the James-Younger gang. And no, Billy the Kid never was a wrangler for the Hash Knife.

The Elusive Scott Bruner

Several times in recent issues of *True West* the name of lawman Scott Bruner has been mentioned. A letter from Arthur Shoemaker, Hominy, Oklahoma, contains material I feel obliged to share. Mr. Shoemaker is researching the life and times of Henry Grammet, former world champion steer roper back in the days when the steer got a sixty foot head start. In his research Mr. Shoemaker found a letter from Harry S. Roll, business manager of the Dewey Roundup during the 1910s and 1920s. Roll, as business manager, often handled large sums of cash, and wrote of his experiences:

"In handling so much cash as we did from ticket sales, I have repeatedly seen ticket sellers standing in money with the floor of the booths completely covered. There was always a risk of holdups. We put on about thirty guards. The list was shown to Mr. Bartles who said, 'Most of these men have done time, haven't they?' I assured him that he was right. Joe was satisfied.

"I remember one time we got a tip that Henry Starr was coming in to take the box offices. Our thirty men were strung out at intervals and all of them had plenty of experience in that line, some for the law and some against it. Henry came in and I was standing with Scott Bruner by the main box office. I knew him and when he came up he spoke very pleasantly to me and turned to Scott and said, 'Scott, that is a good looking gun that you have on.' Scott's answer was, 'She has never missed yet, Henry.' Henry bought a ticket and saw the show."

Mr. Shoemaker says, "Maybe now poor old Scott Bruner can be put to rest." Perhaps not, as of yet Scott Bruner's life and career is virtually unknown. Can a reader provide a picture of this elusive Mr. Bruner? Perhaps that would help us get a better grip on the man.

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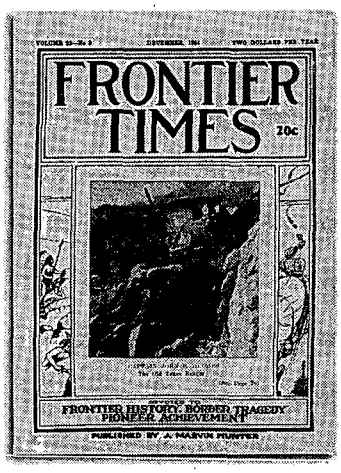

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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BOX FAMILY TRAGEDY

BY GRADY W. BOX

One crisp morning in early October 1866, an Indian scout galloped into Fort Dodge, Kansas, in search of outpost commander Captain Andrew Sheridan. A band of Kiowas had set up camp about thirty-five miles away, he reported, and had in their possession four white women. Quick orders were given and Lieutenant Hesselberger and a detail were immediately dispatched to the Indian camp. There the lieutenant found two young women captives, Margaret Box, seventeen, and her sister Josephine, thirteen. They had been captured by a band of Kiowas in Montague County, Texas, along with their mother, Mary Matthews Box, sister Ida, seven; and a ten-day-old baby. The women were taken captive after the Indians killed and scalped the father, James Jackson "Jimmy Jack" Box.

Mary Matthews Box later related to Captain Sheridan the horrific

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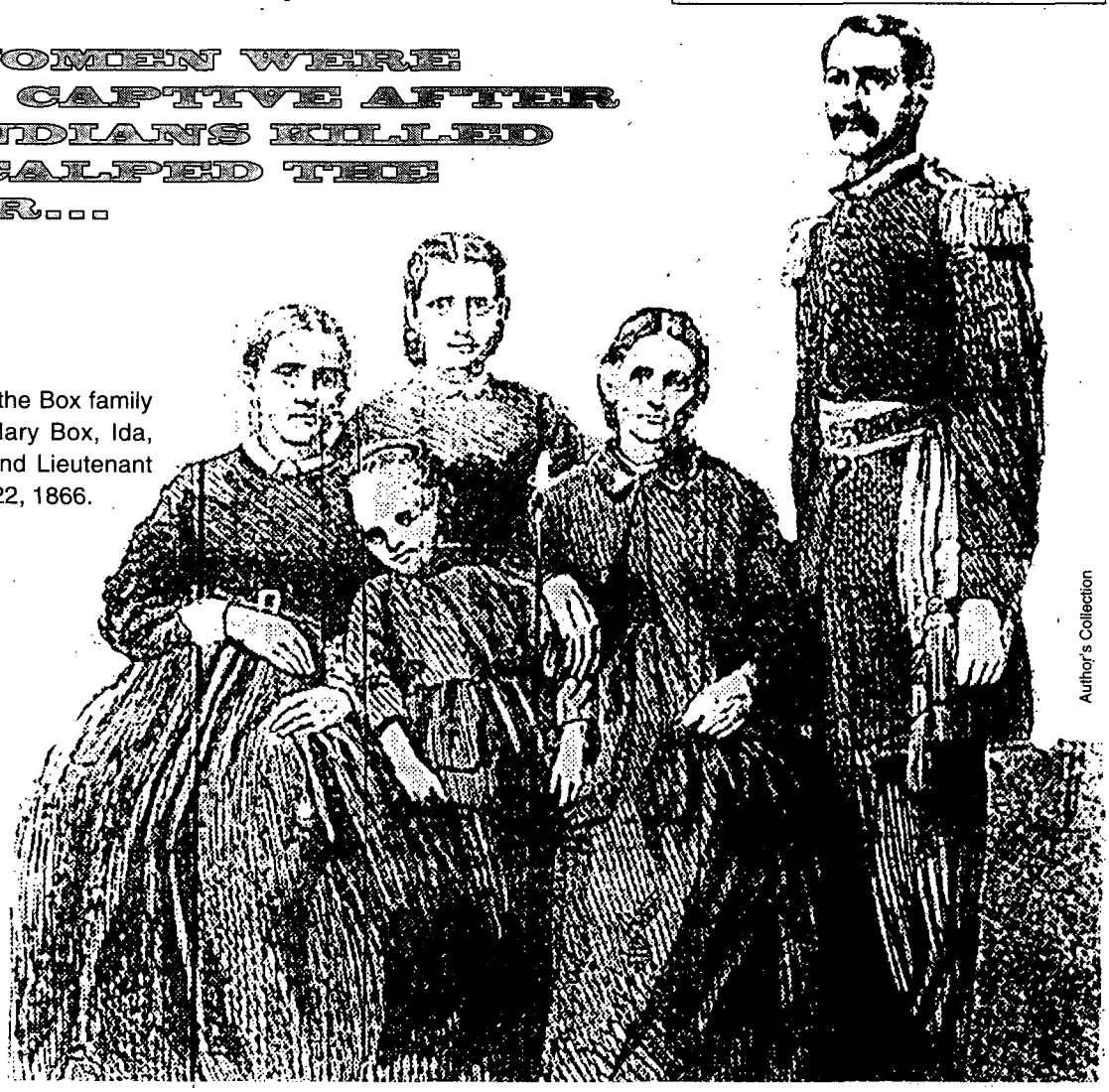

Photograph taken after the Box family rescue. Left to right: Mary Box, Ida, Margaret, Josephine, and Lieutenant Hesselberger, October 22, 1866.

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adventure of her life, a tragic story recalling the most terrifying hardships a pioneer family could encounter.

"About the breaking out of the late rebellion, we moved to Montague County, Texas on the extreme frontier, the cause of our moving was owing to my husband being a Union man and did not wish to fight in the late rebellion," she began.

The family survived the rigors of life on the raw edge of the Red River frontier during the war years. However, as if fighting Indians and outlaws was not in itself satisfying enough, a good Union man like Jimmy Jack had to dodge Johnny Reb neighbors or suffer the fate of other northern sympathizers at the great hangings in nearby Gainesville, Texas.

Box did get a taste of military life although it was with Texas's First Frontier District from Montague County, commanded by Brigadier General James W. Throckmorton. Chasing wild Indians and brushloving Army deserters close to home was a lot more palatable than being drafted into the Confederate Army and perhaps getting killed by a stranger.

On the day of the capture, August 22, 1866, Box and his family were returning home from visiting relatives at Black Jack Grove, Hopkins County, in east Texas. His wagons were loaded with a heavy cargo of tanned leather and Mary was nursing a new baby born on the way back home. As they neared their home at Head of Elm, the Box family was attacked by a band of roving Indians led by Satanta, an infamous Kiowa chief.

Jimmy Jack was killed outright during the attack and his baby killed shortly thereafter on the trail. The women of his family were carried off to suffer rape, privation, and daily beatings for eleven weeks.

The wanton murder and kidnapping of the Box family initially appeared to be a localized, senseless attack by roving Indians. Yet, this tragedy caused ripples of national interest as seen in the December 22,

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1866, edition of *Harper's Weekly* and focused wide-ranging attention on the deliberate failure of the post-war Federal Congress and the Union Army to provide basic civil protection to isolated frontier Texans.

Satanta first tried to sell his captives to Colonel J. H. Leavenworth at Fort Larned. Leavenworth refused to buy the women and in fact scolded Satanta for previous treaty violations. Satanta then took his captives to Fort Dodge and offered to sell them to Captain Sheridan, a less hardened man. Sheridan pitied the plight of the helpless women and quickly bought Margaret and Josephine out of captivity. He was unable to purchase the release of Mary and Ida at the time for Satanta had traded them to an Apache band traveling with the Kiowas. Satanta sold his captives to Sheridan for even more than he had asked Leavenworth. He was later quoted saying that white women captives brought better prices than stolen horses.

General William T. Sherman was on a inspection tour of the command when he was informed of the purchase of the two girls. Sherman promptly prohibited Sheridan to purchase more captives lest it encourage more killings and kidnappings by the Indians. Sherman's order was received before the two other Boxes could be purchased from the Apaches.

Sheridan was now in a quandary. He was blocked from buying the remaining women outright, but he submitted a bold plan for Sherman's approval that would trap the Apache leaders inside Fort Dodge and hold them captive until they released the other two Box women.

An invitation to a council meeting was sent out and the Indian leaders, mostly weaponless, made their way inside the walls to settle on the term of the captives purchase. A peace pipe was lit and talks were underway when the main gates closed.

Soldiers along the walls depressed mountain howitzers double loaded with grape and canister to sweep the Indians if they resisted their entrap-

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ment. Betrayed, the Indians angrily leaped to their feet and received several shots from posted soldiers.

When the Indians were finally subdued, one of the old chiefs was taken up on the palisades of the fort and compelled to signal his camp to bring in the two women. On reaching the safety of the fort, the four freed women captives emotionally reunited, their long, wrenching ordeal finally ended.

Little Ida was treated for burns to the soles of her feet inflicted when she persisted in crying and running after her mother seeking comfort from their ordeal. After the Box women were treated individually for beatings and sexual abuse, they were questioned. One touching story revealed how Margaret received a savage beating when she scooped up a slipper full of water fording a full creek and gave it to her parched mother tightly bound to the back of a horse.

The overwhelmed Indians were released after receiving a stern admonition not to steal any more white women and children. The infuriated Apaches nursed a feeling of betrayal and, joined by several sub-tribal elements of Plains Indians, spent the next two years raiding homesteaders and fighting soldiers. George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry finally forced them into submission in Oklahoma's Wichita Mountains two years later.

Because of the risk of recapture along the overland route to Texas, the Box women were sent home via Saint Louis, down the Mississippi, and finally by sailing vessel to the Texas coast. They were received in Austin by the new governor, James W. Throckmorton, Jimmy Jack's old commanding officer, and escorted home to Montague County.

Memoir writing was in vogue during this post-Civil War period. Mary Box dictated her account to Sheridan first, then George A. and Elizabeth Custer both wrote their own versions of the capture and release a year later. A Fort Dodge visitor, Henry Stanley, of the "Dr. Livingston, I presume fame," wrote his own version of the Box capture and release based on the Custer reports. But perhaps the most accurate account was written by a Corporal Herron, one of the men comprising Lietenant Hesselberger's military detail which made first contact with the Kiowas. The Kiowas related their own versions of the capture as well. Satanta either boasted about or denied his part in the attack several times during his bloody career, depending on which law enforcement official was questioning him and why.

Back home in Montague County, neighboring old timers recollected for the next fifty years where they were and what they did back when wild Indians came to call on the Box family. Margaret and her sisters eventually married local boys and raised their own families in more pacific times. Mary was thought to have remarried even though she was reported to have nightmares the rest of her life. For tough frontier women, life continued, regardless of its tragedies along the way.

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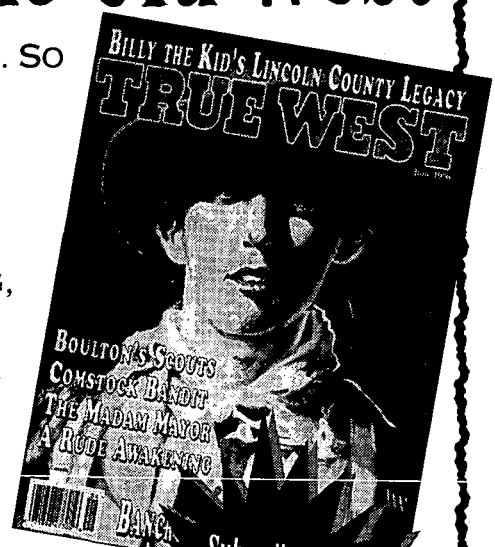

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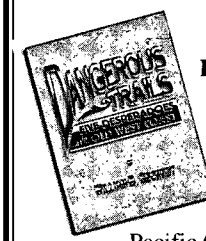

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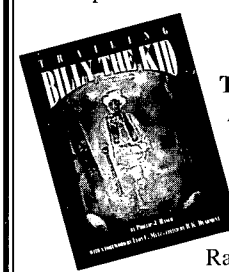

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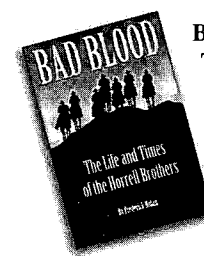

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